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**THE APOSTOLATE OF THE LAITY:
A RE-DISCOVERY OF HOLISTIC POST-WAR MISSIOLOGY IN
SCOTLAND, WITH REFERENCE TO THE MINISTRY OF TOM
ALLAN**

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at the University of Edinburgh in 2014**

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With special thanks and love to Joy, and to our daughters, Eilidh and Katie, without whom none of this would have been possible.

This thesis is dedicated to the memory of my parents, Russell Forsyth (1937-2013) and Jean Forsyth (1938-2004), and of my good friend, Chris Dagleish (1967-2008): '*Chi mi a-rithist thu*'.

ABSTRACT

This thesis offers principles for Christian mission in the present Western milieu derived from a retrieval of the missiology in post-war Scotland of Tom Allan. Allan was a minister, evangelist and theologian of particular public prominence in Scotland and beyond in the period from 1946 to 1964. His missiology focused upon the ‘apostolate of the laity’ through the ‘contextualisation’ of Christianity and Church. It was drawn from diverse, rich sources in Scottish and European theology and tradition. Allan’s gift was to collate and apply such influences contextually to two working-class parishes in Glasgow, and to articulate them within his seminal work on lay evangelism, *The Face of My Parish*.

From 1953 to 1955, Allan was the Field Director of the ‘Tell Scotland’ Movement, which sought to implement his missiology on a national scale. The decision, at Allan’s instigation, to invite Billy Graham to conduct the ‘All-Scotland Crusade’ of 1955 diverted attention from Allan’s lay missiological focus, fatally polarised the differences in emphasis within the Movement, and has since tainted the perception of mission in Scotland.

Following consideration of the implementation of Allan’s model of mission, analysis is undertaken of his sources and inspirations, of the underlying causes of the triumphs and failures of his model, and of Allan’s place in mission theology. In particular, inherent tensions are considered between aspects of the model which together straddle the ‘modern’ and ‘postmodern’ to form a ‘tale of two paradigms’; such as the reliance on the institutional Church as both agent and object of mission or the utilisation of mass evangelism, in contrast with the overarching purpose of the lay formation of a New Testament *koinonia* by a ‘congregational group’.

Consideration of Allan’s work is thereafter broadened by considering several contemporaneous streams which further enhanced ‘contextualisation’ of both mission and Church, to be exercised by and for ordinary people: the East Harlem Protestant Parish; the Gorbals Group Ministry; and Robert Mackie, Ian Fraser and Scottish Churches House.

Then viewing the work of Allan and his contemporaries through the lens of present global missiology and sociological theory, general principles are derived for mission now. Such principles form the basis of a model within ‘late modernity’ of contextual mission which might move beyond the private/public constraint on religious expression. It is a model of ‘local’ mission in conversation with the ‘global’, by the empowerment of the laity to act within the ‘micro-cultures’ which they inhabit. It is a model which re-asserts the primacy of the ‘whole people of God’; seeking the organic growth of *koinonia* with or without reference to the institutional Church; through a ‘both/and’ missiology of word and deed; exercising ‘prophetic dialogue’ in ‘bold humility’; in cross-cultural translation as a two-way process towards a fuller ‘interculturalisation’.

LAY SUMMARY OF THESIS

This thesis offers principles for the expression of Christianity in the present social context derived from a retrieval of the actions and writing in post-war Scotland of Tom Allan. Allan was a minister, evangelist and theologian of particular public prominence in Scotland and beyond in the period from 1946 to 1964. His ideas on the basis of Christian ‘mission’ were centred on the importance of allowing ordinary people, rather than the clergy, to express their faith in word and deed in the ‘contextualisation’ of Christianity and the Church i.e. in making Christianity ‘real’ for the struggles and joys of everyday life on the streets. It was drawn from diverse, rich sources in Scottish and European theology and tradition. Allan’s gift was to collate and then apply such influences to two working-class parishes in Glasgow, and to set out both his inspirations and the practical outcomes in his book, *The Face of My Parish*. From 1953 to 1955, Allan was the leader of the ‘Tell Scotland’ Movement, which sought to implement his ideas on a national scale. The decision, at Allan’s instigation, to invite Billy Graham to conduct the ‘All-Scotland Crusade’ of 1955 diverted attention from Allan’s focus on the lives and witness of ordinary people, split the Movement by alienating those who disagreed with Graham’s methods, and has since tainted the public perception of Christian ‘mission’ in Scotland.

After considering how Allan’s ideas were implemented in his work, analysis is undertaken in the thesis of his sources and inspirations, of the underlying causes of the triumphs and failures of his model, and of Allan’s place in broader theologies of mission. In particular, inherent tensions are considered between aspects of his model which were of an older era and those which were forward-thinking and innovative for his time.

The thesis then broadens the consideration of Allan’s work by looking at several other attempts in Allan’s time to ‘contextualise’ Christianity, in ways which were both through and for ordinary people: the East Harlem Protestant Parish; the Gorbals Group Ministry; and Robert Mackie, Ian Fraser and Scottish Churches House.

Then viewing the work of Allan and his contemporaries in the light of current religious and sociological thinking from around the world, general principles are derived for Christian ‘mission’ now. Such principles form the basis of a model in our times of an expression of Christianity which is not restricted to a private enclave, but ‘crosses over’ to the public realm. It does so by emphasising that ordinary people should be equipped to develop faith communities with or without reference to the institutional Church; through an expression of their faith which involves not only voicing their beliefs but also a constant self-offering for social service for all in the broader community. Such ‘mission’ must be humble and respectful, but be prepared to stand up to injustice in word and deed. The goal is a meeting of Christianity and culture, such that both will be changed for the better as a result, and to the benefit of wider society.

DECLARATION

I certify:

- (a) that the thesis has been composed by me, and
- (b) either that the work is my own, or, where I have been a member of a research group, that I have made a substantial contribution to the work, such contribution being clearly indicated, and
- (c) that the work has not been submitted for any other degree or professional qualification except as specified.

<i>Signature:</i>	
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ABBREVIATIONS IN FOOTNOTES

AA.6 (as prefix) - The Papers of Tom Allan, New College Library, University of Edinburgh

CSWC - Centre for the Study of World Christianity, New College, University of Edinburgh

EC – *Evening Citizen* newspaper

FOMP – *The Face of My Parish*

NLS – National Library of Scotland, Edinburgh

RGA – Reports to the General Assembly of the Church of Scotland

CHAPTER ONE – INTRODUCTION – THE CONFLUENCE OF STREAMS

It is becoming clear that there is one way before all others to which God is calling His Church to-day: and that is to reaffirm the Apostolate of the Laity. So that ordinary folk who know in their own lives something of the transforming power of Christ go out as His ambassadors into the workshop, the factory, the market-place, the community. If the secular world will not come to us, than we must reach out to it, bearing in our lives the image of Christ, and translating our faith into terms of active and decisive witness,¹ *Tom Allan, 1950*

The ten years following the Second World War have been marked by Protestant evangelistic activity on a scale unprecedented in Scottish ecclesiastical history,² *John Highet, Sociologist, 1959*

Posing the challenge ‘Can the West be Converted?’ in his compelling essay of that name, the great ecumenical missiologist of the Twentieth century, Lesslie Newbigin, enquired: ‘why is it that we have a plethora of missionary studies on the contextualisation of the gospel in all the cultures of the world from China to Peru, but nothing comparable directed to the culture which we call ‘the modern world’?’³

This thesis is proposed as a contribution to the missiology on the contextualisation of the Gospel in the West at the heart of an ongoing transition between ‘modern’ and ‘postmodern’ sociological outlooks, which might be described as a period now of ‘late modernity’. It acknowledges the well-trodden distinction that the present Western world operates a hegemony, in Newbigin’s words, of a ‘modern scientific worldview’, whose ‘most distinctive and crucial feature’ is ‘the division of human affairs into two realms – the private and the public; a private realm of values where pluralism reigns and a public world of what our culture calls facts.’⁴ Thus religion resides within the private ‘heretical imperative’, whereby unfettered free choice dictates beliefs and values, all choices being

¹ Tom Allan, *The Secret of Life: Six Broadcast Talks*, (Glasgow: Henry Munro Ltd, 1950), 14.

² John Highet, ‘The Protestant Churches in Scotland: A Review of Membership, Evangelistic Activities and Other Aspects’, *Archives des Sciences Sociales des Religions*, N.8, 1959, 97-104, 101.

³ Lesslie Newbigin, ‘Can the West be Converted’, *International Bulletin of Missionary Research*, 1987, Vol. 11, No. 1, 2-7, 2.

⁴ *Ibid*, 4.

equally valid. Only within this realm is it acceptable to raise the question ‘why?’ By contrast, in the public sphere there is a rational search for consensus on unadulterated ‘fact’, by exclusively considering issues of ‘what?’ and ‘how?’ Once established, it is then expected that such ‘fact’ will be accepted unstintingly by all.

In the journey of Christian mission to seek the closer integration of the former with the latter, the present thesis seeks to engage with realisations for ‘contextualisation’ in mission which begin to emerge from Newbigin’s analysis; through a sense of ‘bridging the gap’, not only between the cultures of Church and world, but also between private and public realms. The realisations thus include, firstly, that exercising mission in the present day West entails a cross-cultural journey, just as it did for the nineteenth century missionary in encountering pre-modern culture in the global South; and secondly, that the cross-cultural journey, is not, as it was then, from the modern, Church culture towards the perceived *tabula rasa* of a pre-modern traditional society, or one of literal translation between ‘mother tongue’ languages, but instead from the remains of the modern, Church culture towards increasingly distinct late-modern culture(s) in Western society, and further to cross the divide between beliefs and rationality which society has established.

Mission is thus a horizontal movement seeking not only to relate to surrounding cultures(s), but also to interrupt the normative, public assumptions where there is taken to be, as Newbigin described it, ‘not...a secular society, [instead] a society which has no public beliefs but is a kind of neutral world in which we can all freely pursue our self-chosen purposes’, thus including ‘an enclave of religious experience’⁵ if we so wish.

However, mission in the West is also exercised within a context, as more recently recognised by the sociologist Roland Robertson,⁶ where it cannot be concluded from the near-complete process of ‘globalization’ that the nations of the West have ever become fully ‘secularized’, or indeed that the Westernised ‘secularization’ process of the past half

⁵ Ibid, 7.

⁶ Roland Robertson, ‘Global Millennialism: A Postmortem on Secularization’, within Peter Beyer and Lori Beaman (eds), *Religion, Globalization and Culture*, International Studies in Religion and Society, Vol 6, (Leiden: Brill, 2007), 9-34.

century has become in any way a global experience. Instead, a new century has ushered in a resurgence in the prominence of religion, in particular in an apocalyptic ‘millennial’ phase, post-9/11.

That being so, rather than the anticipated elimination of the presence of all religious thought in the public marketplace, there is instead a backlash against its resilience, with ever more determined attempts to suppress any interaction between rational, scientific, public norms, and privatised belief systems. If belief systems are grudgingly to persist, they are expected to either pose as ‘Gods of the gaps’ of solace and comfort, or to be permissibly employed only as a lens through which to view a reality which is elsewhere determined.

With those challenges, the attempt to express Christianity to people living within this milieu by crossing such a private/public divide, in Newbigin’s words, ‘without possibility of question, is the most challenging missionary frontier of our time.’⁷

Christian mission thus lies at the friction point where it seeks to encroach within differing cultural viewpoints, and also into the public realm at a level beyond the compartmentalised or the advisory; towards a locus where Christianity might, by the words and actions of ordinary people, offer a critique or condemnation upon pre-supposed public ‘fact’.

In the recognition that these are the ‘cross-cultural’ divides in the light of which present-day Western Christianity must seek to ‘contextualise’ the Gospel, attention turns towards any lessons or guideposts from past experience that might be recovered to assist in the task. There is, therefore, a further realisation from Newbigin’s essay, where he asks: ‘Can the experience of cross-cultural missions to the many pre-modern cultures of our world in the last two centuries illuminate the task of mission’ in the present Western world?⁸ The present thesis seeks to re-tune that question to a more contemporary setting. It asks, can more recent examples of dynamic missiology and mission practice in a Western country such as Scotland in the era that occurred immediately following the Second World War,

⁷ Newbigin, ‘Can the West be Converted’, 7.

⁸ Ibid, 2.

set before and within the first stirrings of the process of Western secularisation towards a fuller post-modernity that is still continuing, illuminate principles for mission now in the ‘cross-cultural’ divides of the present ‘late modern’ Western world?

Believing the answer to be a strong affirmative, this thesis focuses primarily upon a case study and analysis of the missiology and practice of Tom Allan (1916-65). Allan hailed from humble origins as the youngest of eight children of the local butcher in the small Ayrshire town of Newmilns. He was a minister, evangelist and theologian of particular public prominence in Scotland and beyond in the period from 1946 to 1963. The key to the implementation of Allan’s missiology was the organic growth from ‘bottom up’ of Church and community in a complementary evolution, each reshaped and revitalised by the other, through the vanguard of the ‘apostolate of the laity’.

Thus the fulcrum of Allan’s missiology was the formation and development of a lay ‘congregational group’, a dynamic cell trained and activated through Bible Study and prayer as the forefront of mission in the parish. Their purpose was to carry out constant oral witness and social service to those around them, whose content would be contextualised to the local. The institutional Church would face upheaval and re-modelling as the vitality and energy of the ‘congregational group’ aligned with the raw enthusiasm of new arrivals into the wider Church community, counter-balancing and diminishing the strength of institutional conservatism inherent amongst diehard members. In turn, the new arrivals would then replenish the ‘congregational group’, creating a rolling cycle of further development and growth. The Church thus renewed with vigour would demonstrate the signs of a true New Testament *koinonia*, and consequently radiate the Gospel to the parish. In this manner, Allan’s goal was the regeneration of a static institutional Church towards the creation of a lasting ‘missionary parish’ with the Church at its heart.

This thesis considers the writing and actions of Tom Allan in expressing such missiology from primary material; analyses the diverse sources of his missiology from his personal development, inherited Scottish tradition and contemporaneous European missiological

thought; considers his missiology in global as well as local context; examines the tensions in the success or failure of his missiology in practice; and then assesses Allan's missiology in conjunction with concurrent streams in Scottish mission practice which diversified from his work, although still focusing, like Allan, on the ordinary person in forming Christian community.

It will thereafter consider Allan's missiology in a current global, missiological framework, thus setting his work, along with his contemporaries, within David Bosch's identification of an ongoing shift from a 'modern, Enlightenment paradigm' towards 'elements of an emerging, ecumenical paradigm', and locating it within the overarching model of 'prophetic dialogue', as proposed by Stephen Bevans and Roger Schroeder.

From that journey, conclusions are drawn on the direction in which the life and work of Allan and the concurrent streams might point, in seeking a model of lay empowerment in the present that would serve the goals which Allan's missiology represented.

Allan's life and work offers hope today to a Church divided and in decline, for its lessons in the priority of mission to all Christian expression, of acting in mission through ecumenical unity beyond narrow theological cliques, and, centrally, of the residual potential of the ordinary people within the parish Church as institution in times when mission becomes increasingly focused on separate and distinct 'Fresh Expressions' or 'Emerging Church'.

The central kernel of the thesis is thus a recovery through Allan's work of the 'apostolate of the laity', in the belief, like Allan, that the primary way in which institutionalised Christianity can endeavour to exercise contextual mission in the present climate is also through the lives and witness of ordinary Christians. It is an affirmation of the mission of the whole people of God entailing de-clericalisation, the diversification of ministries, and the revitalising of mission and the Church, through a contextualisation of the form and content of the message, and indeed by an overhaul of the presence and purpose of the Church in the parish.

As will become apparent, in these foci Allan's work in lay mission encapsulated the six 'headings of an agenda' for future cross-cultural mission in the West by which Newbigin concluded his article some thirty to forty years after Allan's ministry:⁹

- (a) 'the declericalizing of theology so that it may become an enterprise done not within the enclave...but rather within the public sector' (Allan's focus on lay witness in everyday life, and his own public presence);
- (b) 'the recovery of the apocalyptic strand of the New Testament teaching' of hope for the world (Allan's Christological emphasis and consequent belief that the personal and corporate transformation of ordinary people would occur through Christ);
- (c) 'that witness... means not dominance and control but suffering' (Allan's humble re-iteration of a constant self-offering to the needy);
- (d) 'a radical break with that form of Christianity which is called the denomination' (Allan's insistence on a vision for broad ecumenical mission);
- (e) 'the need to listen to the witness of Christians from other cultures' (his embrace of European missiology, and his global dimensions in work for the World Council of Churches); and
- (f) 'the need for courage' (at all times engaged, present, forthcoming and dynamic).

Before we proceed further in a discussion of 'the laity', however, an epistemological break. Hans-Ruedi Weber, long-time director of the Department of the Laity of the World Council of Churches, was careful to point out that the term 'laity' now in common usage is not derived from the biblical content of *laos tou theou*, 'the people of God', but instead from biblical translation and ecclesiastical usage from the 3rd and 4th Centuries AD onwards.¹⁰

⁹ Newbigin, 'Can the West be Converted', 7.

¹⁰ Hans-Ruedi Weber, 'On Being Christians in the World; Reflections on the Ecumenical Discussion about the Laity', within Nicholas Apostola, *A Letter from Christ to the World: An Exploration of the Role of the Laity in the Church Today*, (Geneva: WCC, 1998), 30-46, 32-33.

Baptism is the central uniting factor in all *laos tou theo*, entailing both those ordained and those not, those paid by the institutions to exercise leadership and those who volunteer, those who lead worship and those who participate.

In the strictest sense, *laos tou theou*, therefore, encompasses ‘the whole people of God’, both clergy and all others. However, for present purposes the convenience is adopted of the negative definition of ‘laity’ as it is commonly understood as ‘non-clergy’; categorised by Weber into three sections: (a) professional workers for the Church, not being ordained clergy; (b) those relatively few lay people who play a very active role in Church activities; and (c) the majority of Christians who regularly worship, but spend most of their work and leisure time outwith the Church environment ‘in the world’.

With the recognition that the boundaries of each section are fluid, Weber identified that ‘the 20th-Century discussion on the laity has in the first place focused on the third group of laypeople’, as ‘their vocation and experience are marked by the fact that they almost always live in the permanent, transient realities of this world, although as Christians they attempt to live according to what Christian faith teaches about the ultimate reality.’¹¹ Group (c), but also group (b), are of particular importance to the present thesis - it is towards those groups that much of the consideration is directed. However, given that there is a focus on the dissolution of the clergy/laity divide, the recovery of the notion of the *laos tou theo* as indeed forming ‘the whole people of God’, both ordained and non-ordained, is also a key consideration.

If the thesis is then to focus on Tom Allan and his contemporaries in relation to ‘the laity’, how far is their work, contextualised as it was to the nation of Scotland, of broader relevance? As befits someone who has practised law for over two decades, an initial disclaimer. The thesis is consciously written from a Euro-centric Protestant perspective, reflecting the writer’s location, upbringing, and ecclesial history in the Church of Scotland, and also the intention of the present investigation to act as a springboard towards missiological theory from the hitherto underappreciated work in mission of Scots in recent

¹¹Weber, ‘On Being Christians in the World’, 34.

times. Whilst seeking to maintain a broad perspective, insofar as the thesis looks towards a re-emergence of the role of the Church laity in mission, it does so consciously in the context of Western Europe, and with a particular eye on Scotland. It is, however, also written in recognition of the broad diversity of Protestant denominations, the worldwide rise within Protestantism of the Pentecostal movement in Latin America, and of independent Evangelicalism in Western Europe and North America. It is, further, written in the knowledge of the deep numerical strength and social influence of the Roman Catholic Church in much of the world.

Perhaps the most resounding concession, however, to be made of the place of Western Christianity in the future of missiology ought to be that it is no longer the centre of the Christian world, and cannot claim to speak from any position of power, privilege or authority. The extraordinary shift to the global South of the locus of Christianity in the past half-century with the growing demise of any residual Christendom model in Europe, means that this thesis, and that of any Western theologian, must be read contextually and can only claim universal appeal insofar as such a contextual reading elsewhere might allow. There can no longer be a defining global culture through which to read theology and missiology.

As Stanley H. Skreslet rightly warns against any attempt that might be made, somewhat egocentrically, to seek to apply universal, global principles of Christian mission to all branches and contexts of the Global Church:

It will no longer do to...assume that the decisions of a few North Atlantic Protestant mission agencies and the magisterium of the Roman Catholic Church could define the universe of present and future possibility for Christian mission. At the beginning of the twenty-first century, it is impossible to ignore the fact that the reality of mission is exceedingly complex, with concealed social processes, political consequences, and complicated organizational dynamics, among other factors, complementing matters of theology.¹²

¹² Stanley H. Skreslet, *Comprehending Mission: The Questions, Methods, Themes, Problems and Prospects of Missiology*, (New York: Orbis Books, 2012), 2.

Thus tentatively stepping forward into the arena, insofar as the present thesis does not reflect what Skreslet describes as ‘the highly variegated nature’¹³ of the field of missiology, this is due to the perspective from which it is written, and a recognition that its outcome will initially be grounded there. Therefore, acknowledging the danger of overstretching its application, unless where a broader contextual application is merited, the present thesis is instead consciously (a) Western, (b) concerned with the future of Christian mission in Western Europe and North America, (c) emerging from a Protestant perspective but seeking to constructively engage with Roman Catholic missiology, (d) investigating mission from a Scottish perspective but proposing that the experience of Scottish mission particularly in the immediate post-War period may serve as an analogy for much of the Western Protestant Church, and (e) focused on the role of the Church laity, and therefore assuming an active ecclesiological appreciation of the foundation of mission.

In doing so, there is no pre-supposition that such a perspective ought to be normative in overall global context, nor that any competing perspective from a different context is inferior. Instead, the overriding concerns in the limited breadth available in the present thesis are the result of universal questions, whose quest for an answer is perhaps the outcome of all missiological reflection: how is Christ speaking now, in this time, in this place, to those who profess Christian faith, so as to engage with the people with whom they interact, in the society and culture in which they reside, in order that they might fully exercise in the world the work of God through the Word of God? In looking in front of my nose to what is around me and what has gone before, I would nevertheless hope also to arch my head higher towards the horizon and account for the world beyond.

What then of a small nation like Scotland in this vast panorama? Scotland is a country once thought of as the bastion and chief progenitor of innovative and authoritative Reformed theology from Knox to Robertson Smith to the Baillie brothers. It has been one of the most fervent exporters of the Presbyterian tradition to the world in mission(s), from

¹³ Ibid.

the appointment of Alexander Duff into the first university chair of Missions at New College, Edinburgh in 1867 as Professor of Evangelistic Theology, to the dedication of the missionary enterprise in Africa, India and China in the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. In order to offer conclusions and proposals of a broader application in the search for a missiological direction which may in part arrest the seeming inevitability of decline, Scotland is well-qualified as a case study amongst the Western nations by a consideration of the relevance and effect of its recent history in missiology and ecclesiology in the Reformed tradition.

With that background, to avoid Christianity in mission and evangelism being ‘lost in translation’ between the ecclesiastical world and the language and rhythms of the street, in my opinion a re-acquisition is necessary in mission of the prophetic voice of a Scottish Christianity which can, in the phrase of Lamin Sanneh, identify and exude in its engagement a ‘dynamic equivalence’ to the culture(s) of the nation.¹⁴

The urgency of achieving that goal to maintain the very existence of the Church in Scotland as institution has been a clarion call of leading commentators for decades. As long ago as 1990 within *Scottish Identity: A Christian Vision*, Will Storrar called for the abandonment of the Church of Scotland’s claim to national, territorial ministry, which for Storrar expressed a ‘view of its identity which looks increasingly shipwrecked in the secular tides of the late twentieth century.’¹⁵ That identity as a Church of Scotland required radical adjustment to a Church for Scotland, displaying a ‘distinctive life from the rest of the secular community, and yet with an overriding sense of responsibility for that nation in mission, social criticism and service.’¹⁶

For David Smith in 1998, the key was the attitude of the Church to the culture of society, and its appetite for costly engagement:

¹⁴ See Lamin Sanneh, *Translating the Message: The Missionary Impact on Culture* (Maryknoll, New York: Orbis Books, 1989).

¹⁵ William Storrar, *Scottish Identity: A Christian Vision*, (Edinburgh: The Handsel Press, 1990), 134.

¹⁶ Ibid, 223.

In a culture pervaded by nihilistic hopelessness and by increasing levels of violence, mission requires a humble and penitent Church prepared to face rejection and suffering...Unless Christian witness is to be confined to the relative security of comfortable suburbs, the Church will need a generation of men and women who hear the call of Christ to authentic apostolic ministry involving costly service and real personal risk. If this call to mission is refused...then the Church in Scotland really will face death. Christianity may survive as a privatised religion providing a warm glow to a minority who opt for it, but as a living, world-transformative faith it will have become extinguished. The light will have gone out.¹⁷

In a year of the potential upheaval of the constitutional and political landscape of Scotland following the independence referendum, the opportunities are rife for re-assessment and re-engagement of all forms of public life. What then is the way forward? How is Christianity to be rescued in mission from the ‘shipwreck in the secular tides’? How is the light of ‘a living, world-transformative faith’ that bears meaning to the lives of ordinary people to be kept burning? How is Christianity, in this culture and of this day, to be different and yet fully engaged?

This thesis commends the recovery of the ‘apostolate of the laity’ which Scotland experienced through the work of Allan and his contemporaries as one of broader application, in its journey from ‘accommodation’ through a process of ‘contextualisation’ towards ‘inculturation’ in the encounter of Christian mission with the culture of post-war Scotland from 1945 to 1970. It asserts that that the expression of Christianity in mission by lay people in contemporary society is also central to mission in the present context, and thus to the future flourishing of Christianity, with or without the Church as institution.

The thesis does so principally by a critical assessment of that halcyon period in dynamic modes of mission in Scotland, where many of the key issues that now perplex the late modern Church were then addressed and confronted in theological reflection and in practice. It was a period where a buoyant Christianity in Scotland acted as a ‘petri dish’ for the experiments and trials of missiological innovation, in an arc between Europe and the USA, implementing international influences as the ink dried on the published pages.

¹⁷ David Smith, ‘The Culture of Modern Scotland as the Context for Christian Mission: A View from Over the Border’, *Theology in Scotland*, Vol V No 1, Spring 1998, 67-68.

Action was precipitated by the restless theology of Bonhoeffer, Bultmann and Ellul, or from international practice such as the incarnational sacrifice of the French worker-priest Movement; the social and political protest of the storefront Churches of the East Harlem Protestant Parish; the local, participative, ecumenical growth espoused by the World Council of Churches; and even the mass revivalism of Billy Graham. Scotland thus acted as a crucible for the simultaneous implementation of rapidly evolving strands of missiology, in all their glory and conflict, with the drama of the success and failure of such models being played out. Through that window we might not only recognise the sources of the legacy passed to us in the present, but also glimpse a view of the future.

The essence of their work, reflected in the key themes of this thesis, was therefore that the effective cultural translation of the Gospel can only be carried out by the empowerment of the local Church laity and not the clergy, within or outwith the existing structures. Concentration was therefore placed upon the development internationally on a lay 'equipping' or 'resourcing' to re-align the outlook of the Church and to exercise mission.

Of importance for the present and future, in particular, is to seek to recover the process of 'contextualisation' of the Gospel in the missionary encounter. That process informed the grand missiological designs of the dynamic Scottish practitioners and theologians emerging in the post-war period, with Allan at the forefront. They were for the most part of a youthful generation, intellectually astute, highly motivated and consciously conversant with the international context of missiological thinking for the avowed purpose of applying it to Scottish life and faith. They sought to imbibe those global influences and apply them in contextualised mission at the sharp end of the cultural, social and ecclesial conditions immediately before them.

The intention is not to offer a dewy-eyed hagiography of those remarkable people and their achievements or failures. It is instead hoped that, through the triumphs and many pitfalls of the recent past in efforts to contextualise Gospel and Church to the lives of ordinary people, an appreciation might emerge of the direction of the road ahead.

Of particular note is the ‘crossover effect’ – the manner in which these voices and projects though distinctive and particular, were also interwoven and respectful of the other. For example, Tom Allan could at once be crucially inspired by Abbé Godin and the French worker priests towards a notion of the local, organic growth of the *ekklesia* through the laity, and yet be central in the invitation to Billy Graham to conduct the All-Scotland crusade of 1955. Does this render such work fatally flawed and incoherent; or does it offer a glimpse of the hybrid nature of all mature missiology, in a combination of the old and the new, of paradigms dimming and emerging, between generations in faith of differing theological hues, seeking a confluence of all possible modes and considerations in an attempt to relate the Gospel?

At the point where the River Lednoch and Waters of Ruchill join the River Earn in Perthshire, stands the village named Comrie, from the Gaelic ‘conriuth’ meaning ‘confluence of streams’. This thesis seeks to identify the potential outcome of the ‘confluence of streams’ in mission for Scottish Christianity by the infusion of all of the models considered; the streams both internally within the work of Tom Allan who sought to embrace all aspects of mission, whether as salvation or as social justice, and also externally of Allan in conjunction with the differing concentrations of his contemporaries.

It is a ‘confluence’ of the ‘modern’ and the ‘postmodern’ elements which they represent, of both ‘Tell’ and ‘Serve’, seeking whatever new creation results from an unconditional self –offering to the people, speaking in their language, in the place where they are. It is a ‘confluence’ which alerts us to the cross-cultural realisation in expressing the relevance of Christianity to the lives of ordinary people today, in ‘making Christianity real’ through the role of the Church laity in mission; crossing boundaries, seeking a hybrid ecclesial community which reflects both donor and recipient, but is of the street and of the world.

From the ‘confluence of streams’, we might thus hope to construct the ground for the formation of a new ‘theology of the laity’; recognising their ‘apostolate’ in building dynamic cells to radiate and mediate the Gospel through engaged, witnessing communities; such that they might ‘cross cultures’ from the private realm of belief to

disturb the public realm of normative fact; exercising ‘prophetic dialogue’ to the prevailing culture(s) in furtherance of a reconciliation of all people to God and to each other.

CHAPTER 2 - MINISTRY AND MISSIOLOGY OF TOM ALLAN (1916-65)

INTRODUCTION

Tom Allan was not only one of our greatest preachers, he was one of our greatest Christians. His life and his preaching had a compassion, an authority and an urgency that characterised the Apostle Paul. *Billy Graham, 1965*.¹⁸

A solitary figure in dog-collared shirt, coat and flat cap quietly closes the side door of St George's Tron Parish Church in the centre of Glasgow. He turns, walks along the street and is soon lost into the arms of a city at night: merging into the bustle of the nightlife and the clamour of the traffic.

The actions of Revd Tom Allan in those few seconds that ended the BBC Television programme¹⁹ on his work were symbolic of much of his ministry and mission. Closing the door on the comfort of the safe and familiar institutional structures and stepping outwards into a direct encounter with the lives of the people on the street. A movement designed to bridge the gap between Christianity and society, to reconnect the institutional Church to the world.

The mission of Tom Allan sought to do so by the empowerment of lay Church members as individuals and in community, to witness to Christ in word and deed where they lived, worked or gathered socially. The language would be of the street, the context would be the life of the world, and the message would thus find a contextual synthesis between Gospel proclaimed in word, Gospel expressed in action and the realities of everyday existence.

Ordinary Christians would be inspired towards a selfless empathy for the life and faith of others, seeking the transformation of the individual and of society in Christ. Allan told his Glasgow congregation in a sermon in 1949:

¹⁸ *The Christian*, 17/09/65, AA6.11.7, 8.

¹⁹ BBC Television, *Meeting Point in a City Centre*, Broadcast on 26 March 1961, DVD held at AA6.7.1.

The only road to true fulfilment of life is through our self-giving sacrifice to others, through a love that reaches out to them irrespective of our own comfort or our own desires, a love which knows no limit in its scope, a love which gives without asking for any reward...a constant self-offering.²⁰

As Ian Henderson later wrote, ‘Tom Allan was different. He had got the message. Christianity has to do with love.’²¹

The present chapter of the thesis considers the content and practical outcomes of Allan’s model of mission by lay evangelism through the Church; by considering what Allan did and said in the period from 1946 to 1964 in parish ministry, at the forefront of a national campaign, and in his writing and speeches.

2.1 ALLAN’S MISSIOLOGY IN ACTION, 1946-64

2.1.1. North Kelvinside 1946-53

In the last years of the 1940’s, it was all very heady and exciting. One came away with the impression that if [North Kelvinside] was what the post-war Church was like, it was going to go places. *Ian Henderson, 1969.*²²

Having graduated M.A. with First Class Honours in English Language and Literature from the University of Glasgow in 1938, and following war service in the RAF, Tom Allan completed ministry training in the Church of Scotland at Trinity College, Glasgow in the summer of 1946.

He was ordained and inducted into his first charge of the parish of North Kelvinside, in the west end of the city of Glasgow, on 4 September, 1946. It was then a high-density, tenemented, working class area. At his arrival, the communicant membership of North Kelvinside Parish Church numbered around four-hundred from a parish population of about ten-thousand.

²⁰ Sermon 23 October 1949, *The Congregational News Review* of North Kelvinside Parish Church, Vol.1 No. 1, December 1949, 6.

²¹ Ian Henderson, *Scotland: Kirk and People* (Edinburgh and London: Lutterworth Press, 1969), 50-51.

²² *Ibid*, 49.

Allan's student connection with Revd D.P. Thomson, Evangelist to the Home Board of the Church of Scotland, grew stronger as a leader of the latter's summer Seaside Missions in 1946 and 1947. In autumn 1947, Thomson was considering how the enthusiastic young Seaside Missioners might be engaged during the winter. The course of the next decade of evangelistic activity in Scotland was embarked upon from a phone call from Thomson to Allan in early autumn 1947. Thomson suggested that the missioners might go round the doors of Allan's new parish in North Kelvinside.²³

In late September to early October 1947, fifty student volunteers under Thomson's direction carried out an extensive parish survey and initial door-to-door visitation over two weeks. In his sermon in the Sunday service at the end of the first week, Tom Allan reflected with foresight on what had occurred: 'during the past week, we have passed through an experience which will affect the life not only of this congregation, but an experience which may have repercussions throughout the length and breadth of Scotland.'²⁴

The final figures after ten days of visitation indicated around 36% of homes without Church connection to any denomination.²⁵ It was, said Allan that Sunday, a 'staggering fact' that so many were entirely distant from organised Christianity, indicating a 'desperate need on our own door-step.' It brought upon Allan the realisation of the scale of the task before him and the urgency required in his response. As he later wrote:

Above all we learned that for a vast number of people on the doorstep of a Church which had been established for over 50 years, that Church might as well not have been there. They were not hostile to it, or antagonistic. They were merely indifferent, apathetic, impervious, both to the existence of the Church and the message it existed to proclaim.

It was a startling discovery to make; but an essential one. At the very beginning of my ministry I was compelled to face up to the fact that my Church in Glasgow was

²³ Thomson later recalled the detail of their conversation in *Personal Encounters*, (Crieff: Research Unit, 1967), 113.

²⁴ AA6.2.3, Sermon 05/10/47, 'Sermons on Matthew'.

²⁵ Tom Allan, *The Face of My Parish*, (London: SCM Press, 1954), 24 (hereafter '*FOMP*' in footnotes).

in the middle of a missionary situation, no less than the Church in Africa or Latin America.²⁶

That realisation, whilst rather obvious in the present ‘late modern’ context, set Allan apart in its time, as seen by the degree of initial shock to Allan of the picture that he uncovered. The parish model of the Church of Scotland was embedded in a normative ‘attractional’ model, based on the assumption of the Christianisation of the nation, the entrenchment of a territorial ministry throughout every corner of the nation through the Church of Scotland, and the strong social and political influence which Protestantism, and the Church of Scotland as an institution, retained in education, local government and ordinary working life. The assumption therefore was that the mere performance of the ordinances of religion, and the presence of the Church in the locality, would be sufficient to bring those in the parish within the Church doors from duty, loyalty and social habit, without any necessary consideration of the parish as ‘mission field’. There was thus little perceived need for the local Church to devise any concept of what mission might entail if contextually applied on its doorstep, because the role which the Church believed it had established in Scottish society over the centuries would safely ensure its continuance.

At the genesis of his missiology, what sets Allan apart as a distinctive missionary thinker and practitioner is not only the stark realisation of the necessity of mission within the local parish, and his understanding of the failure of the local Church in any way to relate to local, working-class lives, but also thereafter the identification of the potential solution beyond a dutiful repetition of what might have gone before, perhaps performed with an exaggerated vigour. Instead, Allan sought to imbue the streets of North Kelvinside with the radical missiology of the French worker-priests, in particular the work of Abbé Godin, as well as contemporary theologians such as Jacques Ellul and Dietrich Bonhoeffer, applying their insights into action in his local context as soon as the English translations of their texts came off the press in the late Forties.

²⁶ AA6.5.11, *EC*, ‘My Week’ c.1959, (vi), 4.

Allan called for a ‘congregational group’ to be formed, lay people dedicated to the outward expression of their faith in prayer, mission and service in the parish, and amongst their families, friends and colleagues in the local context: people they could relate to as being cut from the same hue, those whom they encountered in everyday life or as a result of parish visitation.

As to the method of initiating contact with those in the parish who were outside the Church in order to begin the implementation of the lay ‘missionary parish’ model, ‘Visitation Evangelism’ was now wholeheartedly espoused by Allan and Thomson. All of Thomson’s many campaigns throughout Scotland of the next decade were short-term expositions *in toto* of that method, being campaigns of a brief duration and ‘hit-and-run’ in nature, often involving the engagement of visiting young people as the missionaries and not local parishioners.²⁷ They lacked, however, the permanence of Allan’s application of a model of slow growth by lay witness in the parish setting.

With the ‘congregational group’ fully engaged in ‘visitation evangelism’, the mission in North Kelvinside began in earnest, as did the influx into the Church. Within three months, a hundred new members were added to the existing four hundred. Within two years, the congregation had doubled. In the year 1951 alone, there were 196 new members, 100 of them by first-time ‘profession of faith’. Eight hundred people attended six ‘congregational socials’ in the winter of 1952. At Allan’s first communion Sunday on 15th December 1946, 307 people attended, but by his final service on 19th June 1953, the communicants had more than doubled to 622.²⁸ At Allan’s departure in September 1953, the membership had tripled over seven years to around 1,300.²⁹

²⁷ See Frank Bardgett, *Scotland’s Evangelist, D.P. Thomson, A New Biography*, (Edinburgh: Handsel Press, 2010), Chapters 7 to 11 - being Motherwell 1948, McDonald Road, Edinburgh 1949, the Paisley ‘Mid-Century’ Campaign 1950, the Glasgow Churches Campaign 1950, West Fife 1951, Kirkcaldy 1952, Strathmore 1952-3, North Glasgow Mission 1953-4, North-West Sutherland 1955, Western Highlands 1956, Orkney and Shetland 1957 and the Central Glasgow Churches Campaign 1958.

²⁸ North Kelvinside Parish Church, Kirk Session Minutes.

²⁹ *The Congregational News Review*, Vol 4, No.8, December 1953. As of December 2006, the communicant membership of the parish was a mere 62 – Ronald Blakey ed., *The Church of Scotland Yearbook 2007/8*, (Edinburgh, Saint Andrew Press, 2007), 364. By December 2011, the congregation had united with the neighbouring parish to form Ruchill Kelvinside, with a combined membership of 111 – Douglas Galbraith, ed., *The Church of Scotland Yearbook 2012/13*, (Edinburgh, Saint Andrew Press, 2012), 435.

Allan realised that the key in North Kelvinside was the development of a sense of Christian community at grassroots level, interacting with the everyday lives of the people, as he reflected to his members in 1949: 'I am convinced that in North Kelvinside we are being drawn together as members of one united family under God.'³⁰

Efforts in maintaining the 'congregational group', embarking on 'visitation evangelism' and seeking to serve the community were continuous. Buoyed by the possibilities of the recruitment and inspiration of the laity as the vanguard of a missionary Church, that focus became the centre point of Allan's model of mission at parish and national level for the following seventeen years of his ministry.

And yet, despite the numerical success and the gradual re-alignment of his Church towards mission, Allan viewed the concrete results of the North Kelvinside mission, and its portents for the future, as comparatively poor. Writing in mid-1953, Allan reflected on the past six years: 'it has been a painful business. Perhaps if we had known what lay ahead we would never have undertaken it.'³¹

2.1.2 *The Face of My Parish*

An immensely moving document, springing from a passionate personal concern and bearing on every page the hallmark of integrity...an authentic word of the Lord for minister and layman alike, and for the Church at large as it girds itself for its essential task in this generation. *James S. Stewart, 1954*³²

The literature of evangelism is seldom so candid or so modest in its claims, and seldom so searching in its challenge. *James Whyte, 1984*³³

Ronald Gregor Smith, then editor of SCM Press Limited, encouraged Allan to bring to wider attention his experience in North Kelvinside. The practical implementation of the mission would be set out, along with its inspiration from Allan's broad knowledge of post-

³⁰ *The Congregational News Review*, Vol 1, No.1, December 1949, 2.

³¹ *FOMP*, 18.

³² *The Expository Times*, Vol 55, November 1954, 63.

³³ James Whyte, Preface to New Edition of *The Face of My Parish*, (Glasgow: Loudon Publications, 1984), i.

war European missiology. Gregor Smith was to edit the book *The Face of My Parish*, published in 1954; a classic in lay evangelism which Allan wrote in his manse on Clouston Street in North Kelvinside, in between extensive parish duties, radio broadcasts, involvement with the World Council of Churches and both seaside and parish missions.³⁴ *The Face of My Parish* became a bestseller with widespread influence in Britain and the USA, and was translated into several languages.³⁵

Allan was candid in the Preface to *The Face of My Parish* in his overall assessment of the practical success of the model for mission which he had put into practice:

I have no success story to tell. Rather the reverse. Anything I have to say arises, not from the success of the work in North Kelvinside, but from our failure to do anything more than touch the fringes of the problem of serving a predominantly working-class parish in a Glasgow suburb.³⁶

His early months at North Kelvinside had been a ‘period of questing...for a pattern of congregational life that would be vital and relevant, questing for a method of evangelism that would succeed in breaking through the barriers in the Church and in the world.’³⁷

The focus was to address what Allan saw as the ‘three primary problems... [of] contact, communication and consolidation’³⁸ with those outwith the Church, given that the ‘vast majority of people regard the Church as irrelevant.’³⁹ The model of mission that Allan devised and implemented that was to dominate the rest of his ministry was summarised by him thus in *The Face of My Parish*:

Gradually three principles became articulate for me and I began to hold them with increasing conviction. The first is that the solution to the vast problem communicating the gospel to the masses who live outside the sphere of Christian fellowship is inextricably bound up with the local Church—that the key to evangelism lies in the parish. Secondly, that the Church can only fulfil its function,

³⁴ Compiled in June 1953 as Allan was preparing to depart for the ‘Tell Scotland’ Movement and published in 1954, drawn from twelve articles published in *The British Weekly* from October 1952 to January 1953.

³⁵ A wide range of material related to *FOMP* is held at AA6.5.1.

³⁶ *FOMP*, 7.

³⁷ Rev David Orrock, in Angus MacDonald ed., *A Fraction of His Image*, (Glasgow, Washington Irvine: n.d., c.1965), 5.

³⁸ AA6.5.7, *EC*, ‘Rescue the Fallen’, Article 5.

³⁹ *FOMP*, 12.

and penetrate the secular world when it is exhibiting the life of a genuine and dynamic Christian community... And thirdly, that in all this the place of the layman is decisive.⁴⁰

The keystones to a contextual expression of the Gospel were, therefore, the local, parish Church; the re-vitalising of that Church to approach the marks of a genuine Christian community; and the recognition that lay people were the start and end of any such missionary concept.

To fulfil these goals, shortly after the initial visitation Allan called for a 'congregational group' of the dynamically motivated, who would be what Allan described in *The Face of My Parish* as the 'overwhelming minority.'⁴¹ Revd David Orrock, long-time minister of Lenzie Union Parish Church, was Allan's probationary minister in 1947/8. He later remembered that dramatic pulpit call by Allan:

The winter the group was born was indeed a memorable one. I can still recall the thrill of the evening service when, from the pulpit, Mr Allan invited a public response from those who were prepared to dedicate themselves to this work... To someone like myself who had not seen or shared in the parish mission that had gone before and who knew only the douce, respectable monotony of average Church life, this was a startling experience. One viewed it with a mixture of amazement and skepticism. Yet the passing years were to prove that something real had happened. The effect upon the life of the congregation and upon the lives of those who stood up that night was deep and lasting.⁴²

The functions of the 'congregational group' which was then formed were, for Allan, as a threefold cell: as 'a training school in Christian discipleship' through Biblical study and discussion of the relevance of faith to the world; as 'an attempt to restore the parochial community' of the immediate post-Reformation; and, finally, as 'an evangelizing agency...an outlet in which its members can find the opportunity to express their faith in

⁴⁰ *FOMP*, 66.

⁴¹ *FOMP*, 78, and also from recording of speech by Tom Allan, *The National Conference of United Churchmen: The Company of the Committed*, Elgin House, Canadian Keswick, June 1963, three LP set of programme highlights, produced by Berkley Studio and distributed by The United Church of Canada, Toronto, Ontario. A phrase that I have been told was purloined by Allan from a billboard advert in Glasgow!

⁴² MacDonald, ed., *A Fraction of His Image*, 5.

terms of service,' in the congregation, in the community and in places of work, business and leisure.⁴³

The essence was that 'such a community must be an organic growth...The community cannot be established by decree. It must discover its own existence.'⁴⁴ From his North Kelvinside experience, Allan 'began to realise that here in the group there was the nucleus of a dynamic community, a 'Church within a Church', which bore at least some traces of that first *koinonia*'⁴⁵ of the New Testament.

Allan believed that the group would initiate radical change in the nature of the Church, but in so doing be its saviour:

The work will be ultimately effective if the group of volunteers becomes, through the reality of its experience in the mission, a true *koinonia*; if what began as a parish mission becomes, in effect, a missionary parish; and if the mission of friendship is a prelude to a constant mission of service. These things will not take place overnight. And they will cause upheaval in the Church.⁴⁶

Allan experienced that 'upheaval' in North Kelvinside in response to the rapid Church growth that had ensued from the parish mission. Its cause had been the radical revision of the Church's priorities, and the engagement of ordinary folk, particularly the young through the channel of the 'congregational group', in turn causing the rapid influx of new and unfamiliar faces who had little conception of expected, formalised Church behaviour.

Those forces of change and youthful vigour, and the new members that were their product, were confronted by an existing Church which struggled to cope. Recognising a gap of around six-hundred people between the number of new members as compared to the resulting additional communicants, Allan lamented in *The Face of My Parish* that:

I was in fact in danger of becoming a minister of two congregations, worshipping in the same building...There were those who had grown up in the Church and had

⁴³ *FOMP*, 69-70.

⁴⁴ *FOMP*, 68.

⁴⁵ *FOMP*, 68.

⁴⁶ *FOMP*, 98.

worshipped in it all their days. And there were those who had been brought in by the campaigns of visitation...Tragically we had to watch many of these people drifting away as the months passed from a Church which appeared to have nothing for them and which was incapable of assimilating them into its life.⁴⁷

Allan diagnosed three reasons for the failure in assimilation: firstly, the attitude of the old members, secondly the absence of a vital and living community to join and, most importantly, a 'much deeper malaise' which Allan identified from his principal influence in the work of Abbé Henri Godin and Yvan Daniel in 'France a Missionary Land?',⁴⁸ being 'a cleavage between the Church and the world.'⁴⁹ He thus concluded that 'the main reason for our ineffectiveness in combating the secularism of the world is that we ourselves in the Church have capitulated to secularism of another kind.'⁵⁰

The 'secularism' which had captured the Church was the expression by Churchgoers of 'social distinctions which have divorced the churchgoing people among the working-classes from their neighbours living in the same tenement.' Therefore, for the incomers to the Church to be assimilated they had to become, as Allan expressed it, "respectable", different from the people among whom they lived, and separated from them, not by their Christian profession, but by their assimilation of a super-imposed middle-class culture.⁵¹ For Allan, what was ruining the Church's ability to thus relate to the world was the presence of 'an enclosed community...dominated by a set of values and characterized by a range of 'activities' whose only authority or justification is that they are traditional.'⁵²

Thus, the Church had rendered itself uncomfortable as a social gathering point for those outwith its structures, so that remaining within the Church for them would amount almost to a desertion of their own kind. Furthermore, in confrontational language, Allan diagnosed that the cleft affected the Church's very credibility, as 'the Church is separated

⁴⁷ *FOMP*, 33.

⁴⁸ Henri Godin and Yvan Daniel, 'France a Missionary Land?', Part II of Maisie Ward, *France Pagan: The Mission of Abbé Godin*, (London: Sheed and Ward, 1949).

⁴⁹ *FOMP*, 34-37.

⁵⁰ *FOMP*, 37.

⁵¹ *FOMP*, 39.

⁵² *FOMP*, 41.

from the working-classes by its subservience to a *bourgeois* culture...it has transformed the revolutionary ethic of Jesus into an inoffensive prudential morality.’⁵³

How was this chasm between Church and world to be bridged, such that the laity and the Church might be redeemed from its ‘subservience to a bourgeois culture’ and the ‘revolutionary ethic of Jesus’ be restored?

The ‘first priority’ was ‘the need for the development of a new pattern of life within the congregation’, so that it might become ‘a redeeming influence on the whole community in which it is set.’⁵⁴ This meant the inspiration and empowerment of ordinary people of faith, but retaining the importance of the development of a faith community, recognising through the work of Jacques Ellul that ‘a true lay apostolate presupposes the existence of a community in which and through which the Holy Spirit may speak.’⁵⁵

Allan wholeheartedly adopted as the solution to impact upon the parish of the concept of *rayonnement*,⁵⁶ or the radiation of Christianity as mission from all actions of a Church glowing with the Holy Spirit, by which ‘evangelism is...a permanent element in all Church activities, and...the evangelising agent is not the ordained minister, but the whole Christian fellowship’. Allan wrote that ‘the congregational group exists, then, to translate this idea of *rayonnement* into a practical reality.’⁵⁷

In the ‘congregational group’, Allan placed his trust ‘that this group in fact points the way forward towards a new pattern in parochial life which will supply at least some answer to the problem of bringing the message of the gospel to bear on the lives of those masses around our doors who regard the Church as a harmless irrelevance.’⁵⁸

However, as in the assimilation of new members, Allan further wrote that in North Kelvinside ‘I would like to be able to report that the congregational group has been a

⁵³ *FOMP*, 42.

⁵⁴ *FOMP*, 48.

⁵⁵ *FOMP*, 62.

⁵⁶ Set out in the report of the World Council of Churches from the founding Amsterdam conference of 1948, and published as *The Church's Witness to God's Design: An Ecumenical Study*, (London: SCM Press, 1948).

⁵⁷ Both at *FOMP*, 70.

⁵⁸ *FOMP*, 78.

tremendous success. It has not. It has raised more problems that it has solved. But we believe that they are the problems not of decay but of growth.⁵⁹ That growth potential arising out of a dynamic cell of Church laity was recognised in the qualified success of the group in North Kelvinside, through which Allan could assert:

My own experience has been that when we begin to see the power latent in that inner group of committed men and women who exist in all our congregations, and direct our energies towards the task of making that group a disciplined and trained spearhead for evangelism within the community, then we may begin to see the positive results for which most of us long.⁶⁰

Only by 1953, after all the apparent numerical gains that others lauded, could Allan report that, ‘we are beginning to see the restoration of a genuine parochial community, in which differences of background and training are being transcended, and which is making real both to the group members themselves and the people around the power of the Christian fellowship.’⁶¹

However, such tensions in Allan’s model were to likewise hinder Allan at a national level, as the influence spread of his missiological ideas and practice: between the dynamism of the Gospel demonstrated at local level within the broader community in word, deed and example by a dedicated and inspired nucleus, often of the young, and the failure of its recipient institution to adapt its culture of stolid tradition to allow an integration with those whose imagination had been caught, so as to create some form of purposeful re-generated Church.

2.1.3 ‘Tell Scotland’ 1953-1955

The immense privilege of unfettered access which the Church of Scotland enjoyed in the post-war years to the major media of press, radio and television is now almost unimaginable. Melville Dinwiddie and Ronald Falconer, two Church of Scotland

⁵⁹ *FOMP*, 72.

⁶⁰ *FOMP*, 79.

⁶¹ *FOMP*, 78.

ministers, were effectively in charge of the BBC in Scotland. From 1933 to 1957, Dinwiddie was the regional director for the BBC in Scotland, and from 1945 to 1971 Falconer was responsible for the output of all religious television and radio programmes.⁶²

Determined to fully utilise their media resources for effective evangelism, Dinwiddie and Falconer took initial steps in their Radio Missions of 1950 and 1952. The startling events in North Kelvinside had caught their attention at the BBC, then based in Queen Margaret Drive, Glasgow on the doorstep of Allan's parish.⁶³ Allan became a popular broadcaster in the Radio Missions, given his clarity of language, easy-going use of anecdote, and his warm baritone voice.⁶⁴

In an ominous reflection of what might follow, Falconer believed that both Radio Missions foundered through lack of organised follow-up by the Churches: 'ninety out of every hundred sat back and did nothing... In proportion to their inactivity, so were the results in their parishes.'⁶⁵

Nevertheless, encouraged by the experience of the Radio Missions and determined to utilise their domination of their airwaves to evangelistic effect, Dinwiddie and Falconer corralled the Protestant Churches into considering a fully co-ordinated national effort, to be directed in conjunction with the mass media.

The movement that came to be known as 'Tell Scotland' was born at a Joint Conference of the Home Board of the Church of Scotland and the BBC on 30 October 1952, with a national launch on 4 March 1953. In anticipation of developments, Tom Allan had offered himself to the Home Board for a period of five years as a full-time evangelist. At its first meeting on 2 April 1953, the Steering Panel of 'Tell Scotland' were 'unanimously and

⁶² See Colin MacLean, 'Marvellous New Trumpets: The Media 1920's - 2001', within Colin MacLean and Kenneth Veitch (eds), *Scottish Life and Society: A Compendium of Scottish Ethnology, Volume 12: Religion*, 414.

⁶³ See Bardgett, *Scotland's Evangelist*, 210. Allan was featured twice in a new series of programmes entitled 'The Church at Work'.

⁶⁴ Audiences across Britain for religious radio programmes nevertheless had declined by two thirds in the period 1945 to 1955 – see Catriona M. MacDonald, *Whaur Extremes Meet: Scotland's Twentieth Century*, (Edinburgh: Birlinn Limited, 2009), 285.

⁶⁵ Ronald Falconer, *The Kilt Beneath My Cassock*, (Edinburgh: Handsel Press, 1978), 72.

cordially of the opinion that Mr Allan was the person to lead the 'Tell Scotland' movement.⁶⁶ He assumed the post of Field Director in September 1953.⁶⁷

Representatives of all Protestant denominations were invited to join later that year,⁶⁸ as well as George MacLeod on behalf of the Iona Community.⁶⁹ The Joint Committee of 'Tell Scotland' consisted of senior Church figures such as MacLeod, James S. Stewart and John Baillie. A subordinate executive Steering Panel was formed to plan the detail of the mission and decide organisational issues as they arose. The Iona Community was initially supportive of the Movement, as can be seen from the participation of MacLeod and his Deputy Leader, Ralph Morton, at a high level.⁷⁰ The Movement quickly encompassed the support of virtually all non-Roman Catholic denominations: The Church of Scotland, the Episcopal Church, the United Free Church, the Congregational and Baptist Unions of Scotland, the Churches of Christ and the United Original Secession Church.⁷¹

The description of Ron Ferguson is thus apt: 'Tell Scotland' was a 'broad-based liberal ecumenical movement.'⁷² It was, in Peter Bisset's words, 'perhaps the most important movement of mission that Scotland had seen in the course of the century,'⁷³ and indeed has seen since then. Its presence 'dominated the Churches' thinking and action for a decade.'⁷⁴

⁶⁶ Minute of Steering Panel, 2 April 1953, within the 'Tell Scotland' Archive, in the papers of Scottish Churches House / Action of Churches Together in Scotland, at the Centre for the Study of World Christianity, New College, University of Edinburgh. See also Mabel Small, *Growing Together: Some Aspects of the Ecumenical Movement in Scotland 1924-1964*, (Scottish Churches Council, 1975), 55-59 (compiled from the minutes *inter alia* of 'Tell Scotland').

⁶⁷ Small, *Growing Together*, 55.

⁶⁸ The Roman Catholic Church in Scotland did not take part in ecumenical groups or initiatives until the formation of Action of Churches Together in Scotland ('ACTS') in 1990.

⁶⁹ Small, *Growing Together*, 55.

⁷⁰ MacLeod was a member of the Joint Committee of Tell Scotland, and Morton of the Steering Panel. Morton also wrote under its auspices Tell Scotland booklet No.2 on 'Evangelism in Scotland Today', and James Maitland, Warden of Community House and later minister in the Livingston Ecumenical Parish, wrote *Caring for People – the Church in the Parish*, (Glasgow: Tell Scotland, 1954).

⁷¹ For a full list of all those involved from the different denominations on the Steering Panel, see Falconer, *Kilt*, 76-77. Only the Free Presbyterian Church and some Free Church of Scotland ministers dissented.

⁷² Ronald Ferguson, *George MacLeod*, (London: William Collins Sons & Co Ltd, 1990), 271.

⁷³ Peter Bisset, *The Kirk and Her Scotland*, (Edinburgh: Handsel Press, 1986), 9.

⁷⁴ Falconer, *Kilt*, 75.

The statement given at the founding press conference for 'Tell Scotland' on 9 September 1953 set out the reasons for its founding:

- (i) We are recognising the inadequacy of traditional methods of Evangelism.
- (ii) We are conscious of the apparent failure of the conventional life of the Church to respond in compassion to the needs of the world.
- (iii) We are convinced that the only word for a bankrupt world is the Word of the Church's Lord.⁷⁵

As Frank Bardgett comments, 'this confession of failure...was as much a challenge to the Kirk itself as to those outside. 'Tell Scotland' called on ministers and congregations not simply to attempt new campaigning methods but, more radically, to renew their common life, structures and programmes.'⁷⁶

It was Allan's focus in the 'Tell Scotland' principles on the local, the ordinary and the everyday, with the Church laity at the heart of mission, which once more set the missiology apart. Allan stated the goal of 'Tell Scotland' to be 'to bring the Gospel to bear in the whole life of the nation at every level,'⁷⁷ envisioning an engagement in every corner of society.

When it came to drawing the campaign map for doing so, there were two assumptions that went undisputed. The first was that the foundations of the mission were to be laid in the purging and re-invention of the existing Church within the parochial structure, not by experimental or exploratory forms of mission, or towards para-Church communities outwith its supervision. As Allan departed North Kelvinside, he left the congregation in no doubt that he intended to confront the largely dormant membership of the national Church, and to rouse them towards dedicated action on the street in mission and the service of others. Thus the key for Allan at this initial stage was not so much the 'telling' of

⁷⁵ Minute of Steering Panel, 9 September 1953, within the 'Tell Scotland' Archive.

⁷⁶ Bardgett, *Scotland's Evangelist*, 299-300.

⁷⁷ Tom Allan & Henry B. Meikle, *Tell Scotland Movement*, interview recorded at Aberdeen 31 October 1954; held at William Smith Morton Library, Union-PSCE, Richmond, Virginia, USA.

Scotland as its ‘serving’ through a renewed and re-invigorated parish. He told them at his Farewell Social at North Kelvinside on 22 September 1953:

I become more and more convinced that only a revolution in the conventional pattern of the Church’s life will do in the situation today...I believe that God is calling his Church in Scotland today to new fields of service, which will demand from us a new level of consecration, a willingness to study the faith at a deeper level, and above all, a new readiness to serve our fellow men in love.⁷⁸

The second assumption was also highlighted by Allan at the same occasion: ‘Mr Allan pointed out that this congregation has the opportunity of profoundly influencing the life of the whole Church in Scotland. Anything which he has to say to the Church today comes direct from his experience of what happened here in North Kelvinside. He is going to tell Scotland that the Grace of Christ still makes men new, and that God still uses ordinary people to work his miracles.’⁷⁹

Despite the mixed success and ongoing challenges that he had expressed in *The Face of My Parish*, Allan as Field Director of ‘Tell Scotland’ thus sought to transpose the North Kelvinside model of mission into the missiology of the pan-denominational national movement, with the emphasis remaining on the creation of an insurgent cell of local laity to begin the journey towards ‘missionary parishes’ across the nation:

It had been the congregational group at the heart of the Church’s life which he had seen giving new authenticity to the meaning of the Church. It would be such groups throughout Scotland committed, convinced, and caring, who would make the Gospel count once more within the life of the land. It was they who would bridge the dichotomy between those who saw the essential expression of the Gospel either in caring deed or in saving word. Throughout Scotland, the Gospel would be incarnated in the lives of men and women who in word and deed would make Jesus known.⁸⁰

The founding principles of ‘Tell Scotland’ which were maintained throughout its thirteen year existence were therefore:

⁷⁸ *The Congregational News Review*, Vol. 4, No.8, December 1953, 4.

⁷⁹ *Ibid.*

⁸⁰ Peter Bisset, ‘Kirk and Society in Modern Scotland’, Ch. IV of Badhan, Paul (ed.), *Religion, State and Society in Modern Britain, Texts and Studies in Religion*, Vol.43, (Lewiston, New York: The Edwin Melten Press, 1989), 56.

(i) ...effective evangelism is not a sporadic encounter with the world but a continuing engagement at every level.

(ii) The agent of effective mission is the Church itself, the redeemed community...

(iii) If the Church is to become the agent of mission in its own situation, then every effort must be made to encourage the layman to recognise his calling to the apostolate, and to train him for the task of witness.⁸¹

A three-stage programme was set out to reflect the central emphasis on the laity:

Phase I: September 1953 to June 1954: To encourage and stimulate general discussion on the theme of mission among ministers and office-bearers...

Phase II: September 1954 to June 1955: To recruit and train the lay forces of the Church for the task of witness, through congregational or area groups meeting regularly for prayer and Bible study, and seeking together concrete forms of service in their community, at their work and in their leisure.

Phase III: Beginning September 1955: The outgoing mission, in continuing engagement with the world, of a community exhibiting the marks of genuine 'koinonia', and witnessing to the Lordship of Christ in a unique and striking way in word and deed.⁸²

Much of the general principle could have been written by George MacLeod rather than Tom Allan. MacLeod had adhered to the crucial detail: that the focus would be on the recruitment and enabling of the 'congregational cell', first specifically proposed in a Committee meeting of 4 June 1953.⁸³ This focus replaced a draft model of three mission phases that had specific content more akin to the 'Iona' model of mission from MacLeod's 'Mission of Friendship' to his parish in Govan from 1933-4 onwards – by the intensive preparation of the congregations, special media broadcasts and then follow-up with integration.⁸⁴

⁸¹ RGA 1954, 220. As the latter was expressed in RGA 1956, 232, 'the place of the layman is decisive'.

⁸² RGA 1954, 220.

⁸³ Small, *Growing Together*, 59.

⁸⁴ *Ibid*, 56.

By contrast to this earlier ‘Govan’ draft, the precise content of the mission within Phase III was deliberately left undecided by the Steering Panel, in a nod to the important recognition of what would now be called ‘contextualisation’: ‘The Steering Panel has consistently sought to avoid drawing up a ‘blueprint’ for mission, believing that the local congregation, or group of Congregations, must discover the method best suited to the local situation.’⁸⁵

Whilst an admirable strength at local level viewed through present day eyes, a complete absence of agreed purpose, content and method of mission as starting points, even in the form of general principles or permissible alternatives, served to open the door to conflict between those whose model was one of service and integration with the struggles of the world, and those for whom oral proclamation and calls to decision ought to take priority. That absence then permitted the justification of adopting one of those approaches at national level over the other, as occurred with the later invitation to Billy Graham, further exacerbating discontent at the highest level, and leading to confusion and inactivity on the ground. A failure to fully identify goals or principles might be unnecessary in a unitary parish such as North Kelvinside where decisions could be taken swiftly *ad hoc* and special events might easily be related back to the local and the everyday, but on a national scale where the Church of Scotland enjoyed a membership in 1956 of around 1.3 million spread over more than 2,000 parishes, it begged the questions, ‘what are we meant to do under this banner?’ and ‘to what end?’

Above all, this illustrated that Allan’s model was indeed to be best exercised in a truly contextual manner, through slow, patient, local development of community. It demonstrated that it was not a model capable of ready translation to the national level unless the focus on local decisions as to the principles and content of mission was carefully emphasised and effectively delegated. In other words, if ‘Tell Scotland’ was to significantly progress Christianity nationally under this model, the key would be for the hierarchical structure to step back from ‘top-down’ initiative and to allow each locality to

⁸⁵ RGA 1954, 221.

dictate the direction of mission, where for example the creation of an organically developing Christian community in high-density urban tenements ought to markedly differ from a dispersed farming community.

At all costs, therefore, what the Movement had to avoid at national level under Allan's model was any temptation to centralise and focus the message and mode of mission upon one prominent individual or theological hue, or to create the public perception that such a decision had occurred. It had to 'allow all' or nothing at all.

The first recorded dissension of George MacLeod within the Movement came at the Committee in early 1954. MacLeod was beginning to realise, before an invitation to Billy Graham was considered, that at such an important stage his cherished integration of a 'communal evangelism', by the interaction of faith with the daily struggles of life and concurrent social protest and witness, might be in danger of being relegated to the background.

George S. Gunn had produced a memorandum encouraging the Committee to define not the content of mission, but the broad purposes of the Movement in missiological terms, as:

- (1) An endeavour to bring individuals to a personal acceptance of Jesus Christ;
- (2) A building up of the converts into the fellowship of the Church;
- (3) A challenging of the conscience of the people to disorders of community life...[and]
- (4) A presentation of all this by a penitent Church...⁸⁶

Gunn identified that although most missions might achieve (1), many foundered at (2), most were hesitant of (3) and all failed at (4)!

The Committee again decided to come to no definite conclusion on purposes, as 'this could best be worked out existentially'. George MacLeod complained in a letter to

⁸⁶George S. Gunn, 'Tell Scotland', within the 'Tell Scotland' Archive.

Falconer that the Panel had ‘...‘sidetracked’ Gunn’s proposal, particularly in the third part as it related to addressing the social needs of society.’⁸⁷

The Iona Community had sought to establish such a focus for the whole movement from the beginning. At Allan’s first meeting on 2 April 1953, it was noted that ‘the Glasgow emphasis would be on ‘service’, and that Ralph Morton would meet with ministers in Gorbals, Glasgow, to co-ordinate a scheme to tackle the appalling state of housing in the area. At the next meeting of the Steering Panel on 10 April 1953, it was noted that the Gorbals ministers had adopted ‘George MacLeod’s idea of serving’ and that ‘the Group is going to train congregations to tackle the problem’ of bad housing in the area. Allan, however, was not willing to concede this focus, complaining before the ‘Tell Scotland’ Committee on 4 June 1953 that the confusion on a method of mission was ‘only underlined by talking of mission in terms of ‘service’’. Allan quashed the Gorbals plan, reporting to the Steering Panel of 30 October 1953 that he had met with the Gorbals ministers and obtained their agreement to back the more generalised, mainline ‘Tell Scotland’ route over the next two years.⁸⁸

As he wrote his letter to Falconer, MacLeod may have had at the other side of his desk his notes for The Cunningham Lectures that he delivered in early 1954 at New College, Edinburgh, later published as *Only One Way Left*. It is clear that his suspicions were aroused that Allan might divorce the marriage of faith and social action. In a lecture entitled ‘The Darkness of Mission’, he stated categorically: ‘the disembodied Word is not enough. Even correctly stated it is not the Word at all.’⁸⁹ In an obvious allusion to ‘Tell Scotland’, he continued:

‘Scotland’, you say, ‘is embarking on a rounded Mission of the Church, with the Church as the community in the forefront’. But be careful that we do not still embrace the darkness...Is the [danger] not the deeply rooted conviction that all [political] issues are the periphery of our work, a distant derivative of our Faith whose main engagement lies elsewhere? Is it not a continuing conviction that the Message stands consistent within itself: and that the Church can become

⁸⁷ Minute of Steering Panel, 4th March 1954, and Small, *Growing Together*, 63.

⁸⁸ All of the above within the Minutes of ‘Tell Scotland’, ‘Tell Scotland’ Archive.

⁸⁹ George MacLeod, *Only One Way Left: Church Prospect*, (Glasgow: The Iona Community, 1955), 42.

revitalised within the borders of its own domain: from which domain, at some date always projected into the future, it will seriously close with the claims of Christ in society?⁹⁰

In other words, in terms of Gunn's Memorandum, Macleod's concern was that Movement may be united behind part (1) but go no further, imagining that part (2) would automatically follow without recognition of parts (3) and (4).

Perhaps Macleod's fears were allayed slightly by the terms of a 'Tell Scotland' Pamphlet on the lay group in evangelism, written by Allan and published in mid-1954. Allan emphasised engagement in 'fields of service', reflective of his own two-stage missiology.⁹¹

The first area of the field of service would be wholeheartedly engaged by the later Billy Graham Crusade:

The Group must keep the ultimate objective of all mission in view-which is to lead men to a saving knowledge of God through Jesus Christ.⁹²

The second field of service, that of MacLeod's concentration, would founder somewhat along the way:

Assuredly a group which has come alive to the needs of the time will be as much concerned with the political and economic witness as it will be with preaching at the street corner: it will be as much concerned with the bodies of men as with their souls.⁹³

It would have come as no surprise to Allan that if he sought to pursue the first 'field of service' without the second, MacLeod's vocal judgment would be that by projecting 'political and economic witness' into the future, 'Tell Scotland' was now 'embracing the darkness'. In the event, that was precisely the course that Allan chose.

⁹⁰ Ibid, 55-56.

⁹¹ Tom Allan, *The Agent of Mission: The Lay Group in Evangelism, Its Significance and Task*, (Glasgow: Tell Scotland Pamphlet, 1954), 9-15.

⁹² Ibid, 15.

⁹³ Ibid, 14-15.

The first full year of ‘Tell Scotland’ in 1953-1954 was filled with hope. Allan travelled the country extensively in pursuit of Phase I, the education and recruitment of presbyteries, clergy and congregations.⁹⁴

Allan’s unceasing work and national media exposure made him well known in the public consciousness. As the popular magazine *The People’s Journal* reported in an interview in early 1955, ‘it has suddenly made Scotland aware that the neat, tireless, polite, cultured, 39 year-old son of an Ayrshire butcher is a religious superman. Other ministers describe him as the greatest pulpit orator of the century.’ It noted: ‘his capacity for work is phenomenal...he works 16 hours a day - travelling, lecturing, discussing, broadcasting, writing, and always indulging in what he likes most - meeting people.’⁹⁵

Allan’s encouragement in that period to the lay people of the Church came in radio broadcasts such as the following. He set out a call to arms in words that were to become somewhat contradicted by subsequent events, where he sought to empower the ordinary to seek the extraordinary, and appeared to firmly distance the depth and theological foundation of the movement from any ‘old-style’ mass evangelistic campaign, such as Graham might conduct (my emphasis):

What is the ‘Tell Scotland’ movement anyhow? [It] is a movement of the major Protestant Churches in our land to carry the message of the New Testament into every branch of our national life. *It is not a spectacular campaign with banner head-lines. It’s not a tip-and-run raid into enemy territory.* It is based on the solid conviction that the best method of winning Scotland for Christ...is through the *quiet, patient, consecrated witness of the local congregation* to the Truth by which it lives and for which it stands. That witness will mean different things in different places- at least in detail. But one thing is certain. *The key to the whole Movement is with the laity-with you.*

It could not be a powerful witness, said Allan, ‘unless its members are prepared to take their Faith seriously.’ He explained the degree of obligation upon ordinary Church members: ‘what does all this mean in concrete, practical terms?’ Three things: ‘we’ve got

⁹⁴ His pocket diaries at AA6.9 reveal an astonishing workload and distance travelled.

⁹⁵ Alan Dunsmore, ‘Tom Allan Doesn’t Pull His Punches’, *The People’s Journal*, Feb 26 1955, within the Papers of Jessie Margaret Strathdee or Johnston (1925-2008), daughter of John Strathdee, elder, Treasurer and Session Clerk of St George’s Tron Parish Church, held at The Mitchell Library, Glasgow Ref TD 1800, Box 31.

to learn to pray'; 'we've got to get to know more about our faith; that means study'; and 'we've got to translate all this into terms of service: going out to men in compassion and love to serve them for Christ's sake who died for them.'

Therefore, Allan said in his broadcast, there was a key to 'Tell Scotland' getting off the ground: 'the very first objective of the 'Tell Scotland' movement is to see the emergence of groups of lay people in congregations throughout the country' to meet regularly for these three things – 'we begin there.'⁹⁶

In 1953-54, Allan had succeeded in creating a national air of anticipation for Phase II, filled with potential for an ongoing mission based on the local formation on Christian communities of love, dedication and service. Allan reported in an interview in October 1954 that 'I've been deeply moved over the past twelve months...by the universal acceptance of these fundamental principles of mission.'⁹⁷ Allan was, however, by then a worried man from his travels around the country as to whether that reception could be transferred into practice, saying: 'I am more and more convinced that the Church is not yet ready for what we are asking it to do.'⁹⁸ In other words, he feared that a lacklustre response to the formation of congregational groups would characterise Phase II, and therefore cause the whole project to fizzle out before Phase III got started. Allan concluded that 'some fire has to be kindled before the *Tell Scotland* Movement becomes incandescent.'⁹⁹

Allan believed that the Holy Spirit had led him to the solution. He had attended a Billy Graham rally at Harringay, London in early 1954. He had been 'strangely moved' and 'had come to believe deeply in its efficacy.'¹⁰⁰ The conviction formed in Allan's mind that Graham should be invited to lead an 'All-Scotland Crusade'.

⁹⁶ All at Tom Allan radio talk, 'The Missionary Church', 6-8, AA6.3.2.

⁹⁷ Tom Allan & Henry B. Meikle, *Tell Scotland Movement*, interview recorded at Aberdeen 31 October 1954; held at William Smith Morton Library, Union-PSCE, Richmond, Virginia USA.

⁹⁸ Ibid.

⁹⁹ Allan, *The Agent of Mission*, 21.

¹⁰⁰ Falconer, *Kilt*, 77.

He reported to a meeting of the Steering Panel of 'Tell Scotland' on 22 April 1954 that he had met Billy Graham and the leaders of his Crusade in London, after attending the rally:

It was Dr Graham's wish to come to Scotland but he would only come by the invitation of the Church. Mr Allan felt that if this were separate from the Tell Scotland Movement it could do irreparable harm... He felt that Dr Graham might spark off something within the Church which was really necessary to start Tell Scotland.¹⁰¹

Very quickly at that initial meeting, the lines of schism caused by Graham that would later fatally split 'Tell Scotland' were drawn. Ralph Morton of the Iona Community voiced his opposition: he did not doubt Graham's sincerity but 'felt he was shelving all the crucial problems worrying people today.'¹⁰²

In answering Morton at the meeting, Allan made his hopes clear that the Crusade would be complementary to the lay focus of 'Tell Scotland', dependant on the response of the Church:

It was felt that the general conception of what Tell Scotland was trying to do might be lost if Dr Graham were invited to co-operate with it, but Mr Allan said that [Graham] would be regarded a prelude for *Tell Scotland* and that the real work of the movement would begin in 1955. He felt that Dr Graham would not have a long-term influence unless the Church followed it up.¹⁰³

The departure from the local and the personal was immediately obvious and sat in apparent direct contradiction to the 'Tell Scotland' principles, themselves based on Allan's prior missiology. The decision was referred to a meeting of the full parent 'Tell Scotland' Committee on 3 May, for which MacLeod prepared a memorandum entitled 'Should Billy Graham Tell Scotland?'¹⁰⁴ MacLeod opposed the invitation to Graham under 'six propositions', including the following grounds:

¹⁰¹ 'Tell Scotland' Minutes, 22/04/54, 'Tell Scotland' Archive.

¹⁰² Ibid.

¹⁰³ Ibid.

¹⁰⁴ NLS Acc. 9084, MacLeod of Fuinary and Iona Community: Folder 254, 'Tell Scotland Campaign 1953-9'.

(a) a warning on mass evangelism: ‘By asking Graham do we not lay ourselves open to asking all such as the spearpoint of a mission to Scotland?’;

(b) a call to Scottish tradition, writing that if this ‘is the best spearpoint..., why is it not the mark of our own missionary endeavours? Do you employ this approach in your own congregation? Do you call for decisions at the end of any service?’;

(c) a reminder of the purpose of ‘Tell Scotland’: ‘I don’t doubt Graham would ‘succeed’. Where then does our ‘congregational mission’ come in? I thought our congregations were to be the agents of mission. We must be careful that the congregation does not become merely the ‘follow-up’ of mission. It would if we built up the tradition that the spearhead of mission is in the sporadic and highly organised mission meeting: more electric than the ongoing mission of the Church.’; and

(d) a strong rebuttal of Graham’s separation of conversion and social action: ‘Is the theory that we must get a sufficient number to Christ...and then someone will blow the whistle and we will all get down to social action? Is so, who is to blow it and when?’

With MacLeod’s paper before the members of the Parent Committee, Falconer’s later recollection of the meeting of 3 May was that ‘most of us were against having anything to do with the All Scotland Crusade’.¹⁰⁵ D.P. Thomson’s contemporaneous diary entry, however, suggests a rather different course: of general agreement amongst the full Committee on 3 May, with Ralph Morton being unable to find a seconder for his opposition.¹⁰⁶

A delegation of four, including Tom Allan and Ralph Morton, was sent to London on 6 May to meet with Billy Graham. At a subsequent meeting of the ‘Tell Scotland’ Parent

¹⁰⁵ Falconer, *Kilt*, 77.

¹⁰⁶ *Diary of My Life*, 04/05/54, quoted in Frank Bardgett, *Scotland’s Evangelist*, 189. The full minute of that meeting is suspiciously missing from the ‘Tell Scotland’ Archive, as with those for the further meeting of 14 May 1954, and of 10 June 1954 when Billy Graham was invited to be present, the only such missing minutes from its decade-long history.

Committee on 14 May, the invitation to Graham was passed. According to Falconer, it was only the personality and leadership of Allan that won the day:

We were hopelessly divided; yet unwilling to throw overboard such a devoted and charismatic brother as Tom. We held him in deep affection and respect; in the end we closed our ranks and went with him.¹⁰⁷

In the same month, the broader Church of Scotland at the General Assembly of May 1954 then backed an overture to support the invitation to Graham. They did so in the wake of the endorsement of Tom Allan and the 'Tell Scotland' Committee, and in the reverberations of the Haringay Crusade, recognising too that by now a rejection of Graham would fatally split the whole 'Tell Scotland' Movement, no matter the warning signs that an acceptance of him may also do so. Many had also experienced Graham's preaching during his prior visits to Scotland with 'Youth for Christ' in 1946-7, with positive recollections.¹⁰⁸

MacLeod valiantly opposed the invitation to Graham at the Assembly, albeit it had already been made. Describing the 'speech of the week' by 'George MacLeod at his oratorical best', as he 'went into action with all guns firing', David Read reported the core of MacLeod's argument in the *British Weekly*. MacLeod presciently recognised that the damage to be caused by Graham's presence was not necessarily his method *per se*, but the effect this would have on the prior focus of Tell Scotland's missiology at a local level: 'dare we give the impression to well over a million souls who are our charge and responsibility that the methods of Dr Graham should form the spearpoint of the 'Tell Scotland' campaign?'¹⁰⁹

As was raised above, in the absence of any clear message otherwise from the hierarchy of the Movement at national level, the danger was that only one 'spearpoint' would become

¹⁰⁷ Ibid, 78.

¹⁰⁸ Graham's first visit to Scotland was in spring 1946 as part of a mission by the 'Youth for Christ' movement. In Aberdeen, Graham preached in William Still's Church at Gilcomston Place. Still later described 'a young man of mighty earnestness' - he concluded that 'I have not a word to say against Billy Graham, although I disagree with his mammoth methods'. - William Still and Francis Lyall, *History of Gilcomston South Church, Aberdeen 1868-1968*, (Aberdeen: N.D.), 42.

¹⁰⁹ David Read, 'The British Churches: Another Sign from Scotland?', *British Weekly*, 27 May 1954, 7.

indelibly associated with the meaning of ‘Tell Scotland’. However, as Ronald Falconer later recalled:

George MacLeod fought us, tooth and nail. But George lost the day, as he so often lost gallant fights in that Court. The Fathers and Brethren cheered him to the echo for his passionately brilliant speech – and voted overwhelmingly for us.¹¹⁰

With hindsight, Falconer recognised that this was the beginning of the end: ‘We were persuaded to change our strategy, thereby sowing the seeds which were to choke a promising movement.’¹¹¹

Allan bravely attended a gathering of the Community on Iona in June 1954, where he was left in no doubt as to their opposition, as Morton reported in *The Coracle* of October 1954, echoing MacLeod before the General Assembly:

The general opinion of the Community was that the message and methods of Dr Graham were inadequate and even dangerous in that his campaign would be likely to disrupt the serious and long-term work of the Tell Scotland Movement, with its emphasis on the congregation as the agent of mission.¹¹²

In mid-August 1954, Tom Allan received the acceptance of Billy Graham to conduct the ‘All-Scotland Crusade’ and his confirmation that it would be based in Glasgow in spring 1955.¹¹³ At the request of Billy Graham, Tom Allan was appointed Chairman of the Executive Committee of the Crusade.

2.1.4 The Crusade and its Aftermath

The numbers exposed to the Gospel through Graham’s preaching at rallies in the Kelvin Hall, Glasgow and in football stadia, and by the skilled utilisation of radio relays, were astounding, as Allan noted in its aftermath:

Between the 21st of March and the 30th of April, 1955—the six weeks of the Crusade—a total of 1,185,360 people in Scotland attended meetings of one kind

¹¹⁰ Falconer, *Kilt*, 78. Falconer suggests that their ‘victory’ was depressing: ‘I felt sick inside about it all. So did Bill Smellie as we shared a post-debate meal of gloom. But the die was cast. We must make the best of it.’

¹¹¹ Falconer, *Kilt*, 77.

¹¹² *The Coracle*, No 25, October 1954, 3.

¹¹³ Graham had chosen Glasgow because of its reputation as ‘the most sinful city in Britain’! – *Time Magazine*, 4 April 1955.

or another directly connected with the Crusade. Of these, 830,670 were at the nightly meetings in Kelvin Hall and at the closing rallies in Ibrox Stadium and Hampden Park; 217,700 were at services of the Relay Mission in various parts of the country; and 136,990 were at other meetings addressed by Dr. Graham and Team members during the Crusade. And the total number of enquirers in Scotland during these weeks was 26,457.¹¹⁴

The campaign of Crusade rallies began at the Kelvin Hall, Glasgow on Monday 21 March 1955. For six weeks, Graham preached in front of a volunteer choir that was 1,200 strong. Capacity crowds attended each night of 11,000 people in the main arena, with a further 3,500 in the adjacent circus arena to which the rally was relayed.

On Good Friday, the rally was broadcast live on television and radio throughout the United Kingdom by the BBC, to an estimated audience of thirty million people. Graham preached on Galatians 6:14 and Revelation 3:16, imploring the United Kingdom that it is the indifferent person that ‘makes Christ sick’, they being people who ‘will forever be separated from God unless they repent of sin, accept by faith the depth of Christ and then bend their will to do the will of God.’¹¹⁵

Following the last rally at the Kelvin Hall, closing meetings were held at Ibrox Stadium with an attendance of around fifty thousand, and at Hampden Park where ‘the congregation numbered close to a hundred thousand- the largest congregation ever to assemble in Scotland’s history.’¹¹⁶

‘Relay Missions’, organised by Bill Shannon, were conducted in the week of 10 to 17 April. In thirty-seven centres throughout Scotland, the Crusade rally from the Kelvin Hall was relayed by radio across the country, by liaising with local ‘Tell Scotland’ committees.

Graham’s delivery was ecstatic, rousing and dramatic. Preaching then in his prime, he was undoubtedly an electrifying orator. His sermons were lengthy, at around fifty minutes each

¹¹⁴Tom Allan (ed.) *Crusade in Scotland...Billy Graham* (London: Pickering & Inglis Ltd, 1955), 8.

¹¹⁵George Burnham, *Billy Graham: A Mission Accomplished*, (London & Edinburgh: Marshall, Morgan & Scott, 1955), 36-38.

¹¹⁶Allan, ed., *Crusade in Scotland...Billy Graham*, 15. During the residency at the Kelvin Hall, Graham also addressed large crowds at Tynecastle Stadium in Edinburgh, Pittodrie Stadium in Aberdeen and in Inverness. He spoke to soldiers at Redford Barracks in Edinburgh, at Barlinnie Prison and at John Brown’s Shipyard in Clydebank.

night, and repetitive in the texts employed and the metaphors used. There was a concentration on fear, sin and death – of substitutory atonement in the bloody sacrifice of Christ for our sins and our implication within it- on the need for immediate repentance and redemption to avoid hell. As Allan recalled: ‘invariably the last quarter of an hour of his sermon dealt with the way of salvation –repent, believe, receive Christ, obey.’¹¹⁷

The conclusion of the rally was the ‘altar call’, the invitation by Graham for individuals to come forward to be saved in Christ, as the massed choir sang ‘Just as I Am’. Teams of ‘counsellors’ were employed to then take each ‘enquirer’ to Counselling Rooms.¹¹⁸

Allan was in no doubt as to the effect of the Crusade: ‘for thousands, Kelvin has proved to be the very gates of heaven. This hall may prove to be the turning point in the religious history of Scotland.’¹¹⁹ The Report of the Home Board to the General Assembly of May 1955 echoed that proclamation: ‘We are living in a day of most manifest grace when those who do not thrill with a new awareness to the conquests of Jesus must be blind and deaf.’¹²⁰

Others were not so convinced that Graham and his methods would have any lingering effect. The author J.B. Priestley had attended a Graham rally at Haringay and commented: ‘A tiny minority are genuinely converted...no great harm, no great good, just another show.’¹²¹ Respected Glasgow journalist Jack House was more aggressively critical in the *Evening News*, writing that ‘Billy Graham did not impress me in the least...after an evening as boring as any I have ever had in any hall, the final scene (when the converts came) nauseated me.’¹²²

¹¹⁷ Allan, ed., *Crusade in Scotland...Billy Graham*, 14.

¹¹⁸ A ‘Decision Card’ was made out on the nature of the commitment being made. The follow-up involved initial contact from the ‘counsellor’, then correspondence and Bible materials being sent out in Billy Graham’s name. A local Church follow-up was initiated by the ‘Decision Card’ being sent to the minister of the Church to which the enquirer belonged, or had chosen.

¹¹⁹ Quoted in Burnham, *Billy Graham: A Mission Accomplished*, 68.

¹²⁰ Report of the Home Board, RGA 1955, 233.

¹²¹ Article in *New Statesman and Nation* on Graham at Haringay, quoted in Edward O. Oliver, *Afterwards*, (London, 1957), vii.

¹²² Quoted in Burnham, *Billy Graham: A Mission Accomplished*, 49.

This was nevertheless the most widespread exposure of the Gospel of Jesus Christ to the people of Scotland in the history of the nation. So did it work in its goals not only of ‘winning souls’, but crucially for the purposes of ‘Tell Scotland’ within the present thesis of Phase II recruitment of the laity in readiness for Phase III mission?

The demographic of ‘enquirers’ at the main meetings was set out as follows:

Of the 19,835 people coming forward at the Kelvin Hall, Ibrox, and Hampden, 5,819 were men and 14,016 were women—29% against 71%. 79% indicated that they were making a first-time decision for Christ... 34% signified that they were communicant members of some branch of the Church, and 62% that they were regular attendees at public worship. The age-groupings were as follows: under 12: 11%; age 13-29, 62%; age 30-49, 19%; age 50 and over, 8%.¹²³

Why were there were so few ‘converts’ if the crowds were so large? Of note is the high proportion of churchgoers in attendance, and also amongst the ‘enquirers’, a statistic which was reflected in Allan’s later youth rallies at St George’s Tron. Presumably, their ‘decision for Christ’ had already been taken.

Callum Brown also makes a cogent case that ‘the real success was in its role as spectacle.’¹²⁴ It was showbiz at its best, in an era of Hollywood glamour and a yearning for the ‘thrill of the new’. The rallies held the most allure for youth and women, replicating the Harringay Crusade of the previous year. The low percentage of overall ‘converts’ and their primary demographic amongst those groups was also the experience in the previous year: ‘of those who ‘came forward’ in London in 1954, 65% were women and over 50% were under 19 years of age.’¹²⁵ The departure of these constituencies in the social revolution of 1957 to 1965 was to prove costly for the Church. So too was the failure to translate the sharp, initial hike in attendances and membership in the immediate aftermath of the All-Scotland Crusade into any lasting effect on Church connection, or alteration in the Church’s inherent ethos, the two perhaps being closely linked.

¹²³ Allan, ed., *Crusade in Scotland...Billy Graham*, 108.

¹²⁴ Callum Brown, *Religion and Society in Twentieth-Century Britain*, (Harlow, England: Pearson Longman, 2006), 205.

¹²⁵ Colquhoun, *Harringay Story*, 232-233, as quoted by Brown, *ibid.*

In terms of evaluating the potency of the Crusade as an example of mass evangelism, it was unreservedly superb. It was brilliantly organised by those at the top of the structure, such as Allan and Shannon, and the thousands involved at a more local level. The level of presentation of Graham and his team was near faultless. Religion, for a while at least, was back at the forefront of public life. There is no doubt that the Crusade generated vast publicity. As the *Evening Citizen* wrote, Graham ‘has made religion news again...bequeathed to our native clergy a legacy of renewed interest in God’s word, a legacy for them to exploit when he has gone.’¹²⁶

Graham achieved his primary purpose, as he claimed himself prior to his departure: ‘people are no longer indifferent about religion, and the greatest problem facing the clergy is indifference.’¹²⁷ As was reported in the immediate aftermath: ‘the most popular topic of conversation – on the streets, in night clubs, shipyards and civic luncheons – is Jesus Christ and Billy Graham.’¹²⁸ There are many stories of faith being kindled or renewed by Graham’s preaching. In the longer term, some Church people found a firmer grasp of faith. Many considered action whose commitment had been insipid.

Billy Graham did his job. Scotland was aware of what he did, how he did it and what his purposes were. When he was invited, no-one in Scotland could have been under any illusion that the package would differ from the call to an individualist salvation that had been heard on Graham’s prior visits to Scotland, and demonstrated so publicly at Haringay in the previous year. Nor could they have doubted that the presentation of the message would involve a wreaking of emotion on a wave of mass excitement. As MacLeod had warned before Graham arrived, there was no expectation that any ‘social gospel’ would be preached. Despite criticism of the message, Scotland got exactly what it asked for, on an unprecedented scale. However, as Allan had argued, the Crusade was designed not as the culmination of ‘Tell Scotland’, but as the end of the beginning.

¹²⁶ Burnham, *Billy Graham: A Mission Accomplished*, 60.

¹²⁷ *Ibid*, 73.

¹²⁸ *Ibid*, 41.

In the immediate aftermath of the Crusade, Allan anticipated an intensive mobilisation of the laity as the visible expression of Phase III of the 'Tell Scotland' Movement: 'the outgoing mission will be expressed in many ways – in personal work, in house-to-house visitation, in cells for witness in factory and shop and office, in public meetings, and in other ways yet unexplored. And it seems to me that the full significance of the All-Scotland Crusade will be seen in what happens in Scotland in the next twelve months.'¹²⁹

What then of that litmus test of Graham's intervention within 'Tell Scotland'? In the initial year after the Crusade, there was a considerable amount of visitation activity in parishes, with estimates of around 600 such campaigns from 800 congregational groups.¹³⁰ However, insofar as the Crusade was charged with enabling the widespread recruitment of the laity under Phase II of the plan and thus inspiring the outward mission of Phase III, it failed to do so to a sufficient and lasting degree, nor did those local 'Tell Scotland' committees who did implement Phase III mission experience long-term benefit in the numerical composition of their Churches, or the depth of belief in the Gospel amongst their communities.

There was no dramatic resurgence of mission in Gospel witness and social service, or sustainable increase in membership or attendances. The problem was summed up by Allan in the following year: 'In hundreds of Congregations not even a beginning has been made. No lay group is in being. No permanent mission has been established. No bridge-head to the world, however rudimentary and perilous, has been built.'¹³¹

As Billy Graham's biographer wrote: 'The All Scotland Crusade...had created immense expectancy throughout Scotland. The heather seems dry, Graham had lit a fire and departed, his part done. And the heather did not blaze.'¹³²

¹²⁹ Allan, ed., *Crusade in Scotland...Billy Graham*, 127.

¹³⁰ RGA 1956, Report of the Home Board, 233.

¹³¹ AA6.2.18, Broadcast on 'Evangelism', c.1956.

¹³² J. Pollock, *Billy Graham: The Authorised Biography*, (London: Hodder & Stoughton, 1966), 198.

Despite the beneficial conditions, the brilliant organisation and unremitting zeal on the part of Allan and others, the Crusade was a long-term failure in terms of implementing the empowerment of the laity, the missionary Church, or the conversion of the unconnected masses. The slow decline of the impact and response to 'Tell Scotland' in the late Fifties and early Sixties coincided with the gradual but unremitting diminution in the membership and public influence of the Church in Scotland, and the rapid onrush of secularisation.

The University of Glasgow sociologist John Highet concluded from surveys of the period that: 'It cannot be denied that at least one hope in the minds of missionaries was that their efforts would result in adding appreciably to the numbers of committed and regularly worshipping Christians. If we are right, this hope has not been fulfilled.'¹³³

Any consideration of the overall effect of 'Tell Scotland' and the All Scotland Crusade on Church and nation in the period to 1960 is indebted to Highet's figures, within his three most prominent publications: *The Churches in Scotland Today*, (Glasgow: Jackson Son & Company, 1950); 'The Churches', Chapter 22 of J. Cunnison & J.B.S Gilfillan, *The Third Statistical Account of Scotland : Glasgow* (Glasgow: Collins, 1958); and *The Scottish Churches*, (London: Skeffington, 1960).¹³⁴

They revealed, firstly, an initial post-war growth in Christian affiliation. In 1950, Highet reported that 'there has been an over-all increase of 12,785 in the membership of six Protestant denominations in the period 1947 to 1949, and a probable increase in the Roman Catholic population of some few thousands.'¹³⁵ The gains that have been considered in the work of Tom Allan in North Kelvinside were thus contributory to a more general trend of a numerical rise in this initial post-war period.

¹³³ *The Scottish Churches*, (London: Skeffington, 1960), 111.

¹³⁴ See also Highet's paper to a conference in 1959 summarising aspects of his work - John Highet, 'The Protestant Churches in Scotland: A Review of Membership, Evangelistic Activities and Other Aspects', *Archives des Sciences Sociales des Religions*, N.8, 1959, 97-104.

¹³⁵ *The Churches in Scotland Today*, (Glasgow: Jackson Son & Company, 1950), 229. The six denominations were the Church of Scotland, the United Free Church, the Scottish Episcopal Church, the Methodist Church, The Congregational Union, and The Baptist Union.

Secondly, Highet's research demonstrated a temporary surge in Church attendance in the wake of the All-Scotland Crusade, followed by a significant dip, tending to indicate that any numerical effect upon religious observance was transitory. As he set out in his 1958 publication, a team under Highet's supervision carried out surveys in 1954 to 1956 in which they sought to identify any significant differences in Church attendance in Glasgow caused as a result of the All-Scotland Crusade of 1955. Numbers in the non-Roman Catholic denominations were counted over three Sundays in three periods: in April and May 1954, then in the immediate aftermath of the Crusade in May 1955, and again in May 1956.¹³⁶ The three Sunday average rose from 56,503 in 1954, to 67,708 in 1955, and then fell in 1956 to 62,224 (all around 30% of membership and 8 to 9% of the city's population). The average in 1956 was therefore below the 1955 'Crusade' levels, but above the 1954 levels prior to the Crusade i.e. at a rough midpoint.¹³⁷

Thirdly, Highet's 1960 book supported the veracity of his 1954-56 figures which tended to suggest that the gains from the Crusade and 'Tell Scotland' were less than might have been expected, and further surveyed whether at least the ethos of the Churches had altered as a result of 'Tell Scotland' or the 'All-Scotland Crusade'. He carried out a survey of Scottish ministers of non-Roman Catholic Christianity, with 326 responses.

There were three main questions posed:

(a) Effect on attendance

Of 226 Church of Scotland responses where higher attendances had been reported, only 31 indicated that the Crusade or 'Tell Scotland' had 'some effect' and 16 a 'very slight' effect on the increase, with a variety of unrelated causes being otherwise attributed.

¹³⁶ 'The Churches', Chapter 22 of J. Cunnison, & J.B.S. Gilfillan, *The Third Statistical Account of Scotland: Glasgow* (Glasgow: Collins, 1958), 729.

¹³⁷ Ibid, 730 and Table CL1 at 731. The peak attendance was 72,079 on Sunday 1st May 1955 (the Sunday following the end of the Kelvin Hall rallies). Within three weeks in May 1955, this had fallen to 61,620.

(b) The effect on membership of large-scale or local campaigns

In the Church of Scotland, 93% replied ‘little effect or none at all’ or a ‘slight effect’, with only 7% indicating a ‘decided effect’, with the same result when all denominations were combined. Of the respondents in the first category from the Church of Scotland, 56% reported ‘none at all’.¹³⁸

Stated otherwise, if this sample of 326 Churches in all denominations in 1959 is taken to be representative, any appreciable impact on membership from ‘Tell Scotland’ or the Crusade occurred only in 7% of Churches.

(c) Whether ‘the activities under consideration had had any impact, apart from membership and attendance, on their congregation’

In the Church of Scotland, 47% replied ‘none’, 13 % ‘little’ effect and 40% ‘some’ effect, with a similar distribution when all denominations were accounted for.¹³⁹

Stated otherwise, if this sample is taken to be representative, there was little or no impact on the basic activities of the congregation, and therefore on mission (!), from ‘Tell Scotland’ or the Crusade in around 60% of the Churches in Scotland.

In other words, the re-orientation of the congregation towards mission had abjectly failed in the majority of parishes.

As a cross-check, the later figures of J.N. Wolfe and M. Pickford in their 1980 book, *The Church of Scotland: An Economic Survey*,¹⁴⁰ appear to corroborate Highet’s numerical findings in relation to Church adherence and membership: being an initial burst of increased activity following Graham’s Crusade of 1955, an all-time high in membership in 1956 and thereafter the effects of rapid decline. Again, Wolfe and Pickford’s results

¹³⁸ *The Scottish Churches*, 105.

¹³⁹ *Ibid*, 112.

¹⁴⁰ J.N. Wolfe and M. Pickford, *The Church of Scotland: An Economic Survey*, (London: Geoffrey Chapman, 1980)

tend to suggest, as in Highet's later survey, that the impact in the longer term of both 'Tell Scotland' and Billy Graham was minimal. Dealing with statistics for membership and Professions of Faith, they stated that 'a very pronounced peak was reached in 1955, coinciding with the year of the Billy Graham crusade, followed by a sharp decline, especially from 1964 onwards.'¹⁴¹

Therefore, instead of the anticipated rapid acceleration of Christian adherence and the evangelisation of the nation, the statistical results suggest a rollercoaster effect of a short, sudden lift, followed by a rapid descent down the precipice on the other side, even in the short term after 1956, but especially in the longer term from the Sixties onwards.

Graham's Crusade had thus been a diverting 'flash in the pan', if not more seriously damaging. In place of revival came not only stasis but the decline of the Church of Scotland: '1956 was the end of a dream.'¹⁴² Since then, 'the religious crisis which emerged during the second half of the twentieth century has been unprecedented.'¹⁴³

So why did the failure occur?

The first obstacle after the Crusade to the implementation of Phase III was the immediate departure of Allan as Field Organiser of 'Tell Scotland'. He accepted a call to St George's Tron, Glasgow in September 1955, the very month that Phase III was due to begin. He wanted to return to the grassroots – 'proclaiming the Gospel was his calling and his life work- the work of an evangelist.'¹⁴⁴

Without Allan at the helm, a lack of direction and simmering disunity that had been suppressed by the charisma of his leadership came to the surface:

The Crusade and Tom Allan's subsequent departure did leave the Movement 'hopelessly divided' not only at the level of the Executive Committee, but also

¹⁴¹ Ibid, 82.

¹⁴² Bisset, 'Kirk and Society in Modern Scotland', 58.

¹⁴³ Callum G. Brown, *Religion and Society in Scotland since 1707*, (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 1997), 158. The number of communicant members in the Church of Scotland as of 31 December 2011 was 432,348 (The Church of Scotland Yearbook, 2012/13, 422), as compared to 1,133,515 in 1971, a decline of 62% in forty years.

¹⁴⁴ Bill Shannon, *Tom Allan: In A Nutshell*, (Edinburgh: Handsel Press, Handsel 'Nutshell' Booklet No.5, 2000), 14.

throughout the country. Scotland did see 'the Church fragmented' as never before.¹⁴⁵

It transpired that it was a man of his almost unique calibre, and ability to transcend and ameliorate theological divides who was required to direct such an uneasy alliance at the national level. The unfortunate consequence was that 'none of those who succeeded him had his personal charisma, however hard they tried.'¹⁴⁶

As early as 1957, the cracks began to show within the upper echelons of 'Tell Scotland'. A meeting was called at Troon to discuss the future, partly due to 'certain reservations about the value of the All-Scotland Crusade.'¹⁴⁷ The Steering Panel member, Charles Duthie, expressed a growing undercurrent of regret that must have inspired a loud 'I told you so!' from George Macleod and Ralph Morton, reporting:

...a widespread feeling that the Tell Scotland Movement is in danger of losing its power and direction, perhaps of disintegrating [due to stressing] a personal evangelism which has no social dynamic...an exaggerated trust in mass meetings...with a limited intellectual content.¹⁴⁸

'Tell Scotland' tried to maintain the momentum through 'Kirk Weeks' in Aberdeen and Dundee, intensive local events and conferences based on the German *Kirchentag*, with initial success in re-focusing the momentum of 'Tell Scotland' on the laity, but with diminishing returns. It drew a number of influential and forward-thinking ministers to the four Commissions set up in the late 1950's on 'Evangelism', 'The Bible', 'The Laity' and 'The Community'. The formative work by the leader of the Commission for 'The Community', Ian Fraser, in his book recounting his journey of contextualising scripture with the shipyard workers in his Rosyth parish, *Bible, Congregation and Community*, was written under these auspices for a Kirk Week.¹⁴⁹

However, as a national movement 'Tell Scotland' slowly declined, as did the congregational groups and the hope of an evangelised, Christian society. In May 1958, the

¹⁴⁵ Shannon, *Tom Allan In A Nutshell*, 13.

¹⁴⁶ Falconer, *Kilt*, 82.

¹⁴⁷ Small, *Growing Together*, 78.

¹⁴⁸ *Ibid*, 84.

¹⁴⁹ (London: SCM Press Ltd, 1959).

first full conference of 'Tell Scotland' convenors was organised for Wiston Lodge, Biggar. A mere three years after the Crusade, the parlous state of the 'Tell Scotland' movement at local level on the ground was reported:

It was clear that, as far as the Church at large is concerned, Tell Scotland is not a success story...In many places, the local committees failed to carry anything like all the ministers with them. Reasons given were: this was another stunt: men in parishes are already overwhelmed with their congregational responsibilities: if Tell Scotland is to be taken seriously then ministers are faced with the unenviable task of reorganising their whole approach to ministry.

Some ministers, who might be willing to attempt something, had reservations about the value of the All Scotland Crusade, and as a consequence their allegiance was lost.

Through Visitation Campaigns a number have been brought into the Church, but these did not remain, because the Church is not ready to receive them and the Church had nothing that really gripped them.¹⁵⁰

In its last stages before it was effectively disbanded in 1965,¹⁵¹ the exasperation of its then Field Organiser, Ian MacTaggart, at the failure of congregations to come near to implementing Phase III is apparent. The 'Tell Scotland' report which he presented to the General Assembly of 1961¹⁵² all but serves as its obituary:

Large tracts of the country... have been untouched by the Movement...It would be idle to pretend that the imagination of the Church has been deeply and permanently stirred by the trumpet call to present the 'Good News' to every man, woman and child in the land.¹⁵³

Billy Graham arrived in Scotland at a period in its history when the ground for the transmission of the Gospel was more fertile than it ever had been, or perhaps ever will be. It was an era, as Highet wrote, when the 'just 'not interested' form a minority among the

¹⁵⁰ 'Notes on Wiston Lodge Conference' for Tell Scotland Conveners, May 7-9 1958', 'Tell Scotland' Archive, 1.

¹⁵¹ Subsumed within the ecumenical Scottish Churches Council.

¹⁵² The year afterwards MacTaggart resigned without direct replacement, Colin Day taking on the role of Field Organiser in conjunction with other tasks in the Movement.

¹⁵³ RGA, 1961, 255.

unconnected.’¹⁵⁴ In Callum Brown’s words, in the mid-Century period ‘a vibrant Christian identity remained central to British popular culture.’¹⁵⁵

Despite the beneficial conditions, the Crusade and thereafter ‘Tell Scotland’ were failures in terms of implementing the empowerment of the laity, the missionary Church, or the conversion of the unconnected masses.

Allan had executed an apparent *volte face* in his views on mass evangelism and its ability to integrate with the concept of the ‘apostolate of the laity’ within a parochial structure. Throughout the remainder of his life, Allan was a passionate advocate of the efficacy of mass evangelism and of the ministry of Billy Graham, supporting his return to Scotland in 1961, and consistently defending Graham’s impact and legacy from persistent criticism.

As the death of ‘Tell Scotland’ became certain, competing theories emerged as to the cause:

Inevitably, there were recriminations, especially from those who had bitterly opposed the coming of Billy Graham, and had seen the steady progress of ‘Tell Scotland’ seemingly eclipsed by the apparatus of Mass Evangelism. But there were others who had shared in these shining years of advance, who with varying degrees of enthusiasm and doubt had embraced or at least accepted the ‘All Scotland Crusade’, and who now wondered in their hearts whether it had not all been a terrible mistake.¹⁵⁶

Why did Allan’s visionary missiology set out in the heady early days of ‘Tell Scotland’ ultimately fail to evangelise the nation after the Crusade? It would be easy to offer a one line solution, of which the preferred candidate would be the effect of the Crusade, pointing to the chronological co-incidence of rapid institutional decline. Was an otherwise promising grassroots movement simply crushed under the weight of the Billy Graham juggernaut?

¹⁵⁴ Highet, ‘The Churches’, 749.

¹⁵⁵ Callum G. Brown, *The Death of Christian Britain* (Christianity and Society in the Modern World), (London: Routledge, 2001), 169.

¹⁵⁶ Bisset, *The Kirk and Her Scotland*, 12.

In weighing up the Crusade with the pre-1954 missiology that he and Allan had implemented, D.P. Thomson was later in no doubt which would have been the better course:

The putting of the same time and effort, and of even a fraction of the money spent, into parish and regional work of evangelism in which the local forces were being both trained and used at every stage, would have proved far more effective and fruitful in the long-run.¹⁵⁷

Whilst this is a potent, partial explanation of the decline of ‘Tell Scotland’, and rightly maintains a validation for the ‘pre-Graham’ local, lay model, it is not fully coherent as an explanation for the failure of ‘Tell Scotland’, nor is it wholly transferrable to the decline of the Church in Scotland more generally. The failure of both is somewhat more complex, involving an unfortunate co-incidence of intertwining factors, some peculiar to the Crusade and its after-effects and therefore attributable to the decisions of individuals, but others, perhaps more conclusively, centred on the surrounding ecclesial and social conditions in the country. Whether a diagnosis can be made after the *post mortem* that the decline was due to individual blame, or carried a degree of inevitability no matter what, may remain somewhat elusive. As Peter Bisset argues:

Whatever truth there was in the criticisms, and the proponents of Crusade Evangelism cannot ignore the simple evidence of the ski-slope of decline which immediately followed the Crusade, it is probable that blaming Billy is in itself an insufficient answer to the question of that went wrong during these critical years.¹⁵⁸

In the short term of the aftermath of the Crusade in the mid to late Fifties, one could cite the three factors discussed below that were peculiar to the ‘All Scotland Crusade’ or the use at that point of ‘mass evangelism’, as being contributory to the failure of the pre-1955 ‘Tell Scotland’ model of mission: being the focus on the powerful personality of Billy Graham drowning the central significance of lay witness in the Scottish Church mindset;

¹⁵⁷ D.P. Thomson, *Dr Billy Graham and the Pattern of Modern Evangelism*, (St Ninians, Crieff), 36.

¹⁵⁸ Bisset, *The Kirk and Her Scotland*, 13.

the vacuity of some Crusade ‘conversions’; and the fragmentation afterwards of a loose ecumenical alliance of disparate strands of Christianity due to Graham and his methods.

There were, however, two longer term and more deep seated factors of more general application, which served to undermine the efficacy of the initial ‘pre-Graham’ model itself, and, perhaps irrespective of Graham’s contribution, cast doubt on whether it stood any chance of significant long-term gain. One is missiological and the other sociological: inaction and reaction in the Churches, and the onrush of secularisation. In Chapter 3, they shall be examined in greater depth, along with Allan’s ‘reversion’ to the mass evangelistic method, when assessing the struggles of implementing Allan’s missiology as a whole and its relevance today.

For now, it may be sufficient to emphasise one conclusion: the Billy Graham Crusade may not of itself have been primarily responsible for the rapid decline of the Church of Scotland, but it did play a crucial part in destroying the potential of the Tell Scotland campaign and with it the initial promise of the contextual re-orientation of the Church to the community, at what transpired to be a vital time for such a development immediately prior to major social changes in Scottish society.

It furthermore eradicated for generations the development that had begun of a conception of mission in Scotland based solely on local, lay witness and the organic growth of Christian community through dedicated cells.

Finally, the Crusade proved that mass evangelism, due to its inherent nature, is incapable of successfully acting as the inspiration and empowerment of the laity, whom this thesis asserts now hold the key to the future of mission.

In other words: (a) Tom Allan, in inviting Graham as the spark for lay empowerment, was profoundly and admirably motivated, but was wrong; and (b) mass evangelism as a means of mission in Scotland has had its day in missiological terms, even setting aside the vastly different social climate.

As regards the factors peculiar to the All-Scotland Crusade of 1955, the first was the power of Graham's personality focus and professionalism. The message of the Crusade trampled on the ideas of local, organic growth, which simply got lost. There was an immediate identification of 'mass evangelism' and Billy Graham with Tell Scotland, due to the blaze of publicity and public awareness.

The concepts became blurred of gradual local empowerment of the laity, and the importance of ecumenical unity:

The central significance of lay witness, and the creative alliance between contending aspects of Christian witness appeared to have been destroyed by the high focus upon Crusade evangelism.¹⁵⁹

As Allan's later Assistant Minister Bill Shannon identifies, 'the 'do-it-yourself' evangelism of inarticulate Church members was stopped in its tracks by the slick professionalism of the Graham Organisation'.¹⁶⁰ By comparison, the humdrum of everyday, local Church life and their attempts at mission were put in their place, such that 'for not an insignificant number of ministers, the Crusade was an elephant tramping heavily across their own gardens.'¹⁶¹

The second factor was the potential vacuity of Crusade conversion.

The Churches may have started from a weak base, as it was clear in many cases that the nature of the 'Graham buzz' for individuals was transient. The conclusion drawn after a passage of time was that the 'conversion experience' induced might be so confused and paper-thin as to be not only meaningless but counter-productive. Those being brought in by the Crusade to ostensibly form the spearhead of Phase III mission were not up to the task.

That is the powerful message not of a cynical outsider, but again of a man at the very heart of post-war evangelism in Scotland. D.P. Thomson had received duplicate decision cards

¹⁵⁹ Bisset, "Kirk and Society in Modern Scotland", 57.

¹⁶⁰ Shannon, *Tom Allan: In a Nutshell*, 12.

¹⁶¹ Bardgett, *Scotland's Evangelist*, 310.

for all ‘enquirers’ outside Glasgow. When visiting each area of Scotland, he went through every card with the local minister, to check on whether contact had been retained with each ‘enquirer’: ‘on the whole, the results were disquieting in the extreme. I ended the enquiry more convinced than ever of the dangers of ‘mass evangelism’.’¹⁶²

As to the Crusade itself, Thomson believed that many were misguided and unaware of what they were doing in answering Graham’s call:

Afterwards in the counselling rooms it was sometimes only too obvious that many of those who had come forward just did not understand either what they were doing or why they did it. The results of this can be tragic.¹⁶³

A number of others later felt that they had been duped: ‘I had to live and work with some who had taken a step of this kind, and who bitterly resented it afterwards, believing that they had been forced into a false position under stress of mass emotion. I know what a heartbreak this has been to me and to so many of my clerical brethren.’¹⁶⁴

Even assuming their genuine enthusiasm, what expectation of Church did the Crusade impose on new ‘converts’? The thrill of the spectacle of the mass event, and the brilliance of Graham’s oratory simply could not be replicated on the hard pews of a Sunday morning. There was a naive assumption that someone drawn to Christianity by the ‘Kelvin Hall’ experience would be equally drawn to the ‘damp Church hall’ experience.

Some embarked on a vain search for local ‘Billy Grahams’,¹⁶⁵ reproducing the ‘pernicious cult of the ‘popular preacher’ so disparaged by Allan in *The Face of My Parish*.¹⁶⁶ Others departed the mainstream for more radical evangelical groups ‘whose preaching and theology they found more in keeping with Graham...’¹⁶⁷ Most just fell back to disinterest or disillusionment.

¹⁶² Thomson, *Dr Billy Graham and the Pattern of Modern Evangelism*, 35.

¹⁶³ *Ibid*, 18.

¹⁶⁴ *Ibid*.

¹⁶⁵ Pollock, *Billy Graham: The Authorised Biography*, 199.

¹⁶⁶ Allan, *FOMP*, 100.

¹⁶⁷ Highet, *The Scottish Churches*, 106.

The third factor specific to the Crusade was the fragmentation of a loose alliance.

The ‘Tell Scotland’ Movement was *de facto* distanced from the Crusade, perhaps because of the extent of division as expressed by Ralph Morton and George MacLeod of the Iona Community. It was agreed at the meeting of the Steering Panel on 9 September 1954 that the Movement would not be organizationally involved, nor mentioned in Graham campaign publicity.¹⁶⁸ As Graham’s biographer John Pollock notes ‘the unity was...not as deep as it looked’, often based on loyalty alone:

Those who would not have supported Graham but being committed to Tell Scotland were loyally behind a crusade of which they did not fully approve...deeper still lay a fundamental cleavage on the meaning of the Cross and the nature of the Gospel. The long term effect of the Crusade would depend on these hidden tensions being resolved.¹⁶⁹

As long as Tom Allan remained in control and Graham’s Crusade was successful, all factions might remain buoyed by a spirit of optimism and leave their differences aside. On the other hand, in the absence of either, when recriminations began the coalition was likely to collapse.

It was Allan’s concentration on the need for personal conversion *before* social action that inspired him to invite Graham, as a provider of the former only and not the latter, and that led Allan to justify Graham’s evasion of social and political issues whilst in Scotland. This crucial departure alienated MacLeod, and contributed to the demise of the Movement.

Despite their unity of eventual purpose, ‘Allan -v- MacLeod’ became the battle of competing theological emphases, with Graham as the catalyst. Not only at a local level, but within the upper echelons of the ‘Tell Scotland’ Movement, the Crusade created an irreparable rift. The decision to invite Graham thus ‘was a crucial decision, since it provoked opposition and criticism, and as one of the key factors in the eventual breakup

¹⁶⁸ Small, *Growing Together*, 65.

¹⁶⁹ Pollock, *Billy Graham: The Authorised Biography*, 194.

of the shaky coalition of groups seeking a more missionary approach within the Church of Scotland.¹⁷⁰

The bottom line was that MacLeod 'was utterly opposed to mass evangelism, which he saw as a tempting, glamorous short-cut which would turn out to be a divisive diversion from the genuine congregational missionary task.'¹⁷¹

He denounced what he saw as Graham's evasion of social issues, commenting that if he could not commit to a position, how could his converts be expected to do so? Graham had been asked about Senator McCarthy's 'witch-hunts' in America and had replied 'I have no views on that, my message is spiritual.'¹⁷² MacLeod criticised his fence-sitting as unbiblical:

If by 'spiritual' he refers to some ethereal controversy between man and his Maker which somehow continues independent of the historic process, then Graham may well have an interesting religious theory to present to men, but it is not the religion of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob.¹⁷³

Thus MacLeod asserted that, 'anyone who escapes these issues through a hatch called the 'spiritual' is not teaching Bible Christianity by nineteenth century pietistic escapism.'¹⁷⁴

Yet it is clear that the confrontation which Graham induced had a profound effect on his later ministry. From the vantage point of 1966, his biographer John Pollock wrote: 'if Graham left his mark on Glasgow, Glasgow influenced Graham, and in no way more than his thinking about the social implications of the Gospel.'¹⁷⁵

Indeed, the criticism of MacLeod and others appears to have stung Graham almost immediately, and initiated a gradual departure from the fundamentalism with which he was associated, towards an 'expansive evangelicalism' incorporating social justice. This, in turn, found a place at the heart of Graham's vision, as its founder, of the international

¹⁷⁰ Ferguson, *George MacLeod*, 270.

¹⁷¹ *Ibid*, 271.

¹⁷² *Ibid*, 273.

¹⁷³ In *Ariel*, the Winchester College magazine, as quoted by Ferguson, *ibid*.

¹⁷⁴ NLS Acc. 9084, MacLeod of Fuinary and Iona Community: Folder 254, 'Tell Scotland Campaign 1953-9', 'Should Billy Graham Tell Scotland?'

¹⁷⁵ Pollock, *Billy Graham: The Authorised Biography*, 194.

evangelical Lausanne Movement in 1974. With Lausanne, ‘Graham was creating an alternative not only to the WCC but to American fundamentalism and its missionary sensibilities.’¹⁷⁶

Much to the chagrin of his right-wing backers, two years after the All-Scotland Crusade Graham accepted an invitation from liberal Protestants to conduct his New York City Crusade of 1957, at which Tom Allan spoke on parish evangelism, and invited Dr Martin Luther King to give the opening prayer, introducing him as the leader of ‘a great social revolution going on in America today.’¹⁷⁷ Passing beyond his later dalliance with the politics of Richard Nixon, Graham went on speak out about global poverty, the arms race and in praise of Pope John Paul II.

Whilst his experiences in Scotland in 1955 may have been formative in changing the direction of Graham’s evangelicalism, and thus have influenced the historical realignment of global evangelicalism towards a more purposive social agenda, it is unfortunate for Scotland’s sake that Graham’s position was not more fully formed when he was here.

2.1.5 St George’s Tron, 1955 – 1964

The new minister, Reverend Tom Allan, was the first great man I ever met...an evangelising Christian socialist, he took the old Church by the scruff of the neck...New people poured into the Church from all over the city. Lives were started afresh.¹⁷⁸ *Bill Paterson, Actor, 2008.*

Before Billy Graham had even arrived, Tom Allan had confided in D.P. Thomson in October 1954 that ‘he feels like giving up Tell Scotland.’¹⁷⁹ He had first met with those at St George’s Tron Parish Church, situated on Buchanan Street, Glasgow, in late February

¹⁷⁶ Chris Rice, ‘Cape Town 2010: Reconciliation, Discipleship, Mission and the Renewal of the Church in the 21st Century’, in Robert Schreiter and Knud Jørgensen eds, *Mission as Ministry of Reconciliation*, (Oxford: Regnum Books International, 2013), 52-65, 52.

¹⁷⁷ Ibid.

¹⁷⁸ Bill Paterson, *Tales from the Back Green* (London: Hodder & Stoughton), 94-95 - son of Allan’s Session Clerk at St George’s Tron, Jack Paterson.

¹⁷⁹ D.P. Thomson, *The Diary of My Life*, entries 19/05/54 & 06/10/54, by kind permission of Frank Bardgett.

1955, the month before the All-Scotland Crusade began.¹⁸⁰ Allan had felt bereft when distanced from his calling: preaching and parish evangelism. Allan preached as sole nominee of St George's Tron on 24 April 1955, prior to the end of the Crusade. He was inducted into the charge on 7 September 1955. A parishioner later recalled:

On the first Sunday of Mr Allan's ministry, 11th September 1955, at the morning service Rev Dr William Smellie of St John's Kirk, Perth prophesied 'In coming years you will be delighted to fall on your knees in thanksgiving for what God has done for you through this man.' In introducing the new minister to his congregation, that morning, Dr Smellie said 'the marvellous ability of God in Tom Allan is that he cannot help caring for everyone he gets a decent chance to meet.'¹⁸¹

Allan exhibited in his eight-and-a-half years of city centre ministry an unflagging dedication towards encouraging a core understanding of the missionary basis of Gospel and Church, to be expressed theologically in the preaching of the Word and the service of those in the parish community by the Church laity. It was here that Allan, more than any contemporary, was able to implement the 'Tell Scotland' model of parish and mission; of absolute dedication to the people through self-giving and service, a living presence on the streets and a contextualised Gospel, with the laity of the Church at the heart of it all and the goal of a re-vitalised institution.

As far as worship and Church membership were concerned, the effect on the dormant 'preaching station' was dramatic. The internal activities of the Church were re-vitalised with a rapidly growing congregation, a weekly congregational group meeting, house visitation, and business contacts. The activities of the Church were summarised in a BBC Television programme on Allan's ministry, broadcast on 26 March 1961:

Five years later, St George's Tron is a going concern. On a Sunday evening the Church is near-full; on a Wednesday night, people meet in the Church for bible study; on other week-nights, in various parts of the city, house groups meet to follow up their bible study and apply their findings to their own lives as

¹⁸⁰ AA.6.9, Diary.

¹⁸¹ MacDonald, (ed.), *A Fraction of His Image*, 7.

laymen...The Church is no longer waning; it's got bulk, body and (to Tom Allan's way of thinking) serious evangelical and social purpose...¹⁸²

Allan initiated pre-work and lunchtime services, and opened the doors of the Church for the city to come in during the day. On Saturday nights, he went out with the youth group to speak and preach to those on city centre streets full of revellers, and gave an open invitation to return to the Church for prayers.¹⁸³

Most notably, monthly evangelistic youth rallies were overflowing beyond capacity. The *Daily Express* reporter, one Magnus Magnusson, witnessed a rally held in March 1956, a mere seven months after Allan's induction. His report was written under the dramatic headline '3,300 Queue to hear a sermon: By the man who clears up after Billy Graham.' Magnusson wrote: 'He is doing it by a series of monthly Saturday evening rallies in the heart of Glasgow. Suddenly, since the New Year, attendance figures have bounced.' In January 1956, he reported, there were 900 people, in February 1,600 people, 'and on Saturday there were 3,300 of them- 1,500 at St George's Tron and the rest listened to relayed broadcasts in two other Churches.'¹⁸⁴

The *Glasgow Herald* newspaper described Allan's style at the same rally, a year on from the Kelvin Hall:

It was all very reminiscent-although less arduously emotional- of the six weeks' crusade of Mr Billy Graham...Mr Allan is not, however, a mere imitator of the Graham technique. He adheres to the familiar pattern, but he is careful to make it acceptable to his predominantly youthful audience...He was a jaunty, energetic figure in the high, ornate pulpit. His gestures are comparatively restrained- a slight sawing of the air, a clasping of the hands, a waving of the spectacles, little more...Unlike his American contemporary, Mr Allan persuaded rather than adjured. His message was the peace of Christ rather than the wrath of God.¹⁸⁵

Externally, Allan undertook short-term Canadian Crusades in 1958 to Toronto and Calgary, in 1960 to Hamilton, Ontario and Winnipeg, and in 1961 to Halifax, Nova Scotia.

¹⁸² *Meeting Point in a City Centre*, Editing Script at AA6.7.1, DVD of broadcast at AA6.7.14.

¹⁸³ *The Bulletin*, Nov. 15 1957, Papers of Jessie Margaret Strathdee or Johnston, Box 31.

¹⁸⁴ Newspaper cutting in Papers of Jessie Margaret Strathdee or Johnston, Box 31.

¹⁸⁵ *Ibid.* The *Glasgow Herald* reported 44 people coming forward at the altar call, although 21 of them were from St George's Tron.

Allan's Canadian rallies were in Churches and large arenas, often backed by choirs and soloists, and delivered in like style. The scale of attendance was not dissimilar - the final rally in the Calgary Stampede Corral being before 10,000 people, with 12,000 on the concluding evening in Halifax.¹⁸⁶

As regards the Church's relationship with Glasgow and its people, Allan set the tone for his congregation to engage in and replicate. He was driven by a commitment to demonstrate that the Church cared. A banner was raised outside announcing 'The Church in the Heart of the City, with the City at its Heart'. Allan wrote an influential 'My Week' column in the *Evening Citizen* newspaper until 1964. One such article from 1959 encapsulates the strength of his social commitment and his perception of the responsibilities of ordinary Christians in his congregation:

What is the need in Glasgow today? First, an informed and compassionate public opinion... We need to have our eyes opened to see the city with the eyes of Christ and our hearts broken with the kind of love which sent Him to Calvary...

Second, we need a body of committed men and women in every Congregation who are prepared to put the teaching of Jesus into positive and concrete action, and tackle the social problems on their own doorstep with consecrated understanding and common sense.

So long as there is a man without a chance in Glasgow or a girl looking for a home, none of us who call ourselves Christians can be at peace.¹⁸⁷

The social responsibility of Christian witness and action would be paramount to his model of forming true Christian community. Allan described being radicalised politically by his war experiences.¹⁸⁸ A committed Socialist, he considered standing as an MP in 1946 in preference to a life in ministry. His writing was highly critical of apartheid¹⁸⁹ and of racism in the workplace,¹⁹⁰ and supportive of the Civil Rights Movement in the USA.¹⁹¹

¹⁸⁶ MacDonald, ed., *A Fraction of His Image*, 20.

¹⁸⁷ AA6.11.7, EC, 31/10/59.

¹⁸⁸ Tom Allan, *Why I Believe*, (Crieff: St Ninian's Book Department, 1963), 6.

¹⁸⁹ AA6.11.3, EC, 15/05/60.

¹⁹⁰ AA6.5.11, (iii), 10.

¹⁹¹ AA 6.11.7, EC, 'The biggest social challenge facing the West', 15/06/63.

Allan thus vigorously defended the locus of the Church to speak out on social issues: ‘it is not only a right. It is a clear, inescapable duty. If the Christian faith has nothing to do with the ordering of man’s life in this world, then it has completely broken with its Founder.’¹⁹²

The impetus was theological – an all-embracing love of God for all people within the parish, no matter their social standing or religious belief, to be exercised by all those within the Christian community. He told the congregation of St George’s Tron of the expectations upon them as the laity of the Church in mission and service:

First, we’re a parish Church, with a God-given responsibility for every living soul in the parish 24 hours a day...it means the respectable and the dissolute, the rich and the poor, the good and the evil, the young and the old, Protestants, Roman Catholics, Muslims, Jews, Communists-there are no labels to define our responsibility. It is to all men all the time.

Second, we are part of the Church of Christ. This is what the Church exists in the world to do. Its Gospel is not for some privileged handful of people. It is for the whole world. Its compassion is not limited to the lovely and the loveable. It extends to the unlovely and the lost. Only then can we be true to Christ.¹⁹³

Allan had immediately recognised the need of the people on the streets directly outside his Church building, situated as it was at a key junction geographically in the very centre of the city. Allan wrote to the congregation, ‘Round the coffee stalls, pubs and cafes of the city centre where thousands spend their leisure, is centred one of the greatest social problems of Glasgow. Together with lay people, we are going to these coffee stalls trying to get alongside the broken, hopeless despairing wreckage of humanity with which we are challenged there.’¹⁹⁴

As Allan set out on many occasions in his weekly newspaper column, he initiated contact and in some cases an ongoing faith and Church connection with alcoholics, prostitutes and criminals.¹⁹⁵ Allan talked in the newspapers about the connections made with those who

¹⁹² AA6.11.1, *EC*, 14/05/60.

¹⁹³ AA6.5.7, *EC*, ‘Rescue the Fallen’, 1959, Article 1.

¹⁹⁴ Papers of Jessie Margaret Strathdee or Johnston Box 31, File 31, TD1800, *News Review* of St George’s Tron, June 1964 – from an article ‘A Wonderful Partnership’ by Angus MacDonald.

¹⁹⁵ For example, AA6.5.2, *EC*, ‘The Black Abbot Finds God’, & ‘Down-Town Parish’, 30/08/58.

would not normally attend Church, those in city centre at night and in the ‘model lodging-houses’ for the homeless: ‘we’ve seen some pretty miraculous conversions here... We’ve had ex-convicts, ex-Borstal boys, street walkers...’¹⁹⁶

The key for Allan was to inspire the congregation into outward action, by confronting them with life as it was lived on the Church’s doorstep. As member Angus MacDonald wrote in the parish newsletter in June 1964:

We saw the Glasgow that St George’s Tron members cared for-the Clyde, the suspension bridge, the coffee stalls, the neon-lit dance halls, cinemas, bars and model-lodging houses, the prostitutes.¹⁹⁷

The height of this experience was during the Central Glasgow Churches Campaign of 1958, the last of D.P. Thomson’s major campaigns and the final mission endeavour to have an association with ‘Tell Scotland’. St George’s Tron was the fulcrum of activities co-ordinated with other city centre Churches, providing many of the volunteers and opening its doors to those on the streets around them. As Thomson noted in his diary for 18 April 1958:

The feature of the Campaign was coffee-stall work which went on night after night and brought in a strange miscellaneous crowd of thieves, pickpockets, prostitutes, drunkards etc-the most moving and thought provoking sight and experience of any Campaign I have ever been on...the way the young people of St George’s Tron gave up their sleep to that work among thieves, prostitutes and social outcasts I will never forget.¹⁹⁸

Given what he was experiencing around him, Allan became increasingly outspoken on social issues, particularly the appalling housing conditions in Glasgow’s Victorian slums, and the link between poverty, environment and crime.¹⁹⁹ However, as Allan expressed on television in 1961:

¹⁹⁶ Cutting from the *Evening Times* newspaper, Papers of Jessie Margaret Strathdee or Johnston Box 31, File 31, TD1800.

¹⁹⁷ Papers of Jessie Margaret Strathdee or Johnston Box 31, File 31, TD1800, *News Review* of St George’s Tron, June 1964 – from an article ‘A Wonderful Partnership’ by Angus MacDonald.

¹⁹⁸ *Diary of My Life*, 18/04/58, quoted in Bardgett, *Scotland’s Evangelist*, 333.

¹⁹⁹ e.g. AA6.11.7, EC, 31/12/64 and AA6.5.7, Article 4.

After five years, we are only just at the very beginning of things. We need something more to do this work than we can ever give through the ordinary life of any congregation. We need a place open seven nights a week, day and night, where folk...can be nurtured, cared for and guided and sustained by the love of God's people.²⁰⁰

If a concrete example was needed of Tom Allan's missiology in action, and of a concept of a Church within which the laity were spurred into service of the disadvantaged by the fire of their faith, then it was the vision which led to the opening of the 'Rehabilitation Centre' in Elmbank Street, Glasgow.

In his pastoral letter to the congregation of St George's Tron Parish Church, Glasgow, within the *News Review* for June 1962, their minister wrote 'this month sees the fulfilment of a dream. The Rehabilitation Centre in Elmbank Street will be opened on the 8th of the month by the Lord Provost, and the Dedication Service will be led by Rev. John L. Kent on behalf of the Presbytery of Glasgow. Several members of our own congregation will be engaged in full-time service at the Centre...I know that they will be supported by your prayers, and by such active assistance as you can give.'

He explained to the *Glasgow Herald* of 15 November, 1957, that St George's Tron had plans to raise £20,000 (now around £340,000) for its 150th Anniversary in the following year. Half would go to the renovation of the Church building, the other half for the social project. The original idea had been to open their own coffee stall beside the Church, later developing into constructing a refuge within the Church building, to be formed by cutting down the size of the sanctuary and incorporating residential accommodation.

Allan set out his plans to the congregation, expressing an aim 'to provide a Community Centre- a place where those in need can find help for body, mind and spirit and where they can be brought to newness of life through the power of Jesus Christ.'²⁰¹

²⁰⁰ *Meeting Point in a City Centre*, Editing Script at AA6.7.1, DVD of broadcast at AA6.7.14.

²⁰¹ Tom Allan, *1808-1958: One Hundred and Fifty Years of Worship and Witness*, (Glasgow: St George's Tron, 1958), 1.

But how and where was it to come about? Allan gave a speech at the Social Service night of the General Assembly of the Church of Scotland in 1960. In the speech he said:

How are we to communicate the Gospel...? It is through our compassionate caring for men so that the Kingdom of God is made manifest in terms which men can understand, and in which the Word of the Gospel becomes relevant. It is as we exhibit the love of Christ in action that men see beyond our works to the One in Whose Name we are caring.²⁰²

Lewis Cameron of the Social Service Committee was in the audience, and was inspired. Cameron began conversations with Allan about how the central Church could unite with the congregation of St George's Tron in setting up a Rehabilitation Centre, the institutional Church later donating the use of premises at Elmbank Street, Glasgow.

Elmbank Street would come to house a drop-in advisory service, and also short-term residential accommodation for homeless women. A further property at West Princes Street would house on a longer-term basis younger girls who had been on the streets, in an attempt to bring them back into mainstream society. The centres were partly funded and staffed by the congregation of St George's Tron, and by some of Allan's old parishioners from North Kelvinside.

At the time of its opening in June 1962, Allan was in no doubt about the theological foundation and justification for the Centre, describing it as a place for those on the streets to be offered 'friendship, a hand to help, a heart to believe in them.'²⁰³

He responded to a letter to a newspaper which had described such people as 'irredeemable' and condemned the waste of money from the Centre. Allan pulled no punches in reply:

I confess that I'm guilty of the most unchristian emotions of seeing red when I read that kind of rubbish. If most Churchgoers regard tramps, drifters and prostitutes as irredeemable then either they should give up going to Church or start reading their Bibles and begin to believe what they profess to believe by their Church membership...

²⁰² AA6.2.18, Speech on 'Social Service' Night, General Assembly, 25/05/60.

²⁰³ AA6.5.7, Article 5.

...Success or failure has nothing to do with it. It is a question of obedience to Jesus Christ, who gave Himself – as He said- not for the righteous, but for those who are sinners, and know it.²⁰⁴

It was a practical social work within an overt Christian framework. The centre was open for twenty-four hours per day, seven days per week, carrying out advisory work through two staff social workers and providing accommodation. The main problem encountered at the Centre was alcoholism, and also what were described as ‘character disorders’. Many were noted to be unemployed, from broken homes, some younger men were drug addicts, some with marital problems. In 1969, it was re-named ‘The Tom Allan Centre’ in his memory, and continues to flourish to this day as a Counselling Centre.

Allan described his mark of a true Church as ‘its inclusive character, its capacity to unite within itself men and women of every type and background.’²⁰⁵ By including the weak and the vulnerable as an essential part of his ministry through the Centre and as a fundamental focus of his Church, the realisation of the full breadth of the Gospel and to whom it spoke was grasped by his congregation and broader society.

A heart attack in December 1961 led to a year’s absence, following which Allan returned to work at St George’s Tron with the same passion as before. Allan flew out in December 1963 to address a Billy Graham evangelical conference in Miami, but had a severe heart attack on the first day of arrival. He demitted as a result from St George’s Tron on 31 March 1964, to be editorial director of *The Christian* newspaper, run by the Billy Graham organisation. His last sermon was preached on Palm Sunday, 20 March 1964, his words being transmitted from a tape recorder in the pulpit.²⁰⁶

Allan was awarded the St Mungo Medal and Prize by the City of Glasgow in December 1964, for the citizen who had done most good for the city in the past three years, ‘reserved

²⁰⁴ AA6.11.7, EC, 16/06/62.

²⁰⁵ FOMP, 46.

²⁰⁶ Clerk to Glasgow Presbytery, Andrew Herron, wrote to Allan on 2 April 1964 on his demission echoing the popular mood: ‘it is very difficult indeed to understand why a work so useful as that which you have been doing should be terminated in this way’ -AA6.1.4.

for those who have made an outstanding contribution to the life of Glasgow.’²⁰⁷ Removed from his calling, as his friend David Orrock recalled, ‘four years of semi-invalidism chafed his spirit’. Without preaching, Allan felt ‘his usefulness was at an end.’²⁰⁸

Tom Allan died of heart failure at Victoria Infirmary, Glasgow on 8 September 1965, aged 49.

2.2 CONCLUSIONS

Tom Allan’s missiology in action was evangelical yet compassionate; theologically astute and mature yet contextualised and comprehensible; structured upon the Church yet dedicated to the people; and above all dynamic, active and engaged outwith ecclesiastical structures, in an absolute compassion to all, with a bias towards the poor and downtrodden. The focus was upon the primacy of the ministry of the lay people of the Church congregation, to be inspired and empowered by their faith and recurring missionary action.

The implementation of his missiology was affected by the challenges within its terms, the choices made by Allan, and its interaction with the inherent struggles developing in society and the Church from the late Fifties onward.

The following Chapter analyses Allan’s missiology in greater depth, examining its sources and inspirations, and then considering the key tensions that impacted upon Allan’s ideas in practice. Following consideration of how contemporary mission streams to Allan enhanced his model of mission in Chapter 4, and relevant present global missiology in Chapter 5 to place Allan’s work in contemporary context, the Conclusions of Chapter 6 will propose principles of how Tom Allan’s missiology and that of his contemporaries may retain a resonance for today.

²⁰⁷ Henderson, *Scotland: Kirk and People*, 48.

²⁰⁸ AA6.11.7, *The Christian*, 17/09/65, 8.

CHAPTER 3 – SOURCES, INSPIRATIONS AND ANALYSIS OF TOM ALLAN’S WORK

INTRODUCTION

This chapter focuses upon analysis and interpretation of Tom Allan’s model in Scottish social and religious context and his place in global missiology, as a precursor to considering other contemporary models of mission in the post-war period in Chapter 4, and global missiology in present-day terms in Chapter 5.

In Chapter 3.1, the sources and inspirations upon which Allan’s missiology was based are examined: in formative personal influences; Scottish post-war Church and society; the surrounding missiological climate in Scotland; the powerful influence upon Allan of European missiological writing; Allan’s ecumenism and international involvement in furthering a theology of evangelism with the World Council of Churches; and his missiology in the context of the international prominence of theologies of the laity in the Fifties.

Thereafter, in Chapter 3.2, a closer identification is offered of the role within the practical ‘failure’ of Allan’s model of tensions caused by the beginnings in his time, in David Bosch’s terminology, of a ‘paradigm shift’ which continues presently, being from the ‘Enlightenment’ paradigm of ‘modernity’ towards the disparate globalisation of ‘postmodernity’. It separates out three areas where such tension between the ‘old’ and the ‘new’ was acute in Allan’s missiological and sociological context: (a) in his attempted revolution of the Church being met with stolid resistance by clergy and laity; (b) in the effect upon the ‘apostolate of the laity’ of rapid social secularisation in the period from 1957 to 1963; and (c) in the practical and missiological challenges caused by Allan’s espousal from 1954 onwards of Crusade-style mass evangelism, purportedly in addition to local lay mission.

The pertinence of Allan’s missiology to the present is that we continue to struggle with the same tensions in ‘late modernity’, against a cultural backdrop where the processes of

secularisation may be more developed but are incomplete. We, therefore, continue to live, like Allan, in a time of uncertainty where what has gone before in Church and world is disappearing from view but has not departed, requiring a reflective missiology which must recognise points of conjunction and conflict with all that is developing.

General conclusions are therefore drawn at Chapter 3.3 as to the practical and theological successes of the model, and preliminary reflections offered on the legacy for now of Allan's missiological theory. Such reflections will be developed in the final chapter to identify principles for mission derived from the starting point of Allan's work that are relevant to the present.

3.1 SOURCES AND INSPIRATIONS

3.1.1. Personal Influences

What drove Allan towards the style of ministry and mission that he adopted in his early years in ministry in North Kelvinside?

Before Tom Allan entered parish ministry in 1946, there had been three formative influences upon his life and faith which would form a background to his later work – encounters and friendships with two individuals, and a life-changing 'conversion' experience during the war. His evangelical, Christologically-focused theology increasingly influenced his direction.

Tom Allan grew up in a location and within a working-class Presbyterian tradition which emphasised the centrality of family, community, personal faith, Biblical commitment and integrity: 'we were brought up...to honour and cherish the...Christian faith from our earliest childhood'.²⁰⁹ A crucial influence upon his later ministry and theology was ordained and inducted on 25 March 1936 to his home Church, whilst Allan was a student at the Glasgow University of Glasgow studying English, and intending a life in teaching:

²⁰⁹ Allan, *Why I Believe*, 4.

A new minister arrived at Loudon East Church in Newmilns-William Fitch... Under his influence, Tom Allan got a vision of a new kind of adventurous Christian life – something unorthodox.²¹⁰

The two became good friends and later colleagues. At his heart, Fitch, like Allan, ‘was a strong character of deep evangelical persuasion.’²¹¹ Fitch, like Allan, was a dynamic, driven, intellectually astute, young, working-class Protestant from a small Scottish industrial town, in his case Falkirk, and from a background of a large family raised on discipline, determination and godly dedication.

Fitch’s theology throughout his ministry in Newmilns, Springburn Hill, Glasgow and later in Toronto was a conservative evangelicalism of systematic biblical exposition, emphasising personal decision, salvation and atonement.²¹² He was a prominent supporter of Billy Graham, after the latter had preached in his Church in 1946.²¹³ If the question is asked, ‘why did Allan ‘revert’ to mass evangelism with the invitation to Billy Graham?’, here is a partial explanation in the influence of a close friend and confidant.

In the middle of ministry training at Trinity College, Glasgow, Allan volunteered for the RAF, where he served from 1940 to 1945.²¹⁴ Whilst in France in the last months of the war, Allan was profoundly influenced in the future course of his life and ministry by events at a Church service in Reims on Easter Day, 1945.

Allan later wrote: ‘I owe my life and my Christian faith to...an unknown Negro G.I.’. When he sang ‘Were You There When They Crucified My Lord’, ‘God spoke to me, revealed the hollowness of my own life, in that moment of vision I understood what the

²¹⁰ AA6.4.1., Leaflet for Allan’s 1958 Calgary Mission.

²¹¹ From a letter by Revd Donald J.B. McAlister to David and Mary Stay, within personal papers relating to William Fitch held by Revd Prof. A.T.B. MacGowan.

²¹² Fitch moved from Newmilns to Springburn Hill Church, Glasgow on 27 January 1944, where his student assistants in the late Forties included later prominent conservative evangelicals William Still, James Phillip and George Philip. Fitch further inspired Church member Eric Alexander into ministry. Alexander later followed directly in Allan’s footsteps as minister at Loudon East, Newmilns (1962-77) and at St George’s Tron, Glasgow (1977 -1997).

²¹³ Graham ‘gave an invitation, an unheard of thing in Scotland. In two or three minutes, sixty two people had come forward...Billy said the preacher (Fitch) came to him with tears in his eyes and threw his arms around him in a big hug. It was, he said, the best thing that had happened in his Church in years’ - Wheaton College, Illinois, Billy Graham Crusades Collection: J Stratton Shufelt, 224.1.16.

²¹⁴ Allan served in the RAF from 15 August 1940 to 29 October 1945 in military intelligence, latterly at the Supreme Allied Headquarters in France.

death of Christ meant, knew that I had been there...' The experience 'beyond any shadow of a doubt was the turning point of my life...this was my conversion.'²¹⁵

In this dramatic Damascene experience can be seen too the seeds of his later willingness to accept and adopt 'preaching for a decision' in his own ministry and missiology, and to endorse Graham's 'altar call' as one to which he could relate: a moment of preaching of itself could be capable of bringing a person to a formative Christian experience.

As to mission and evangelism playing a central role in Allan's ministry, a key influence whom Allan first encountered at Trinity College²¹⁶ was David Patrick ('D.P.') Thomson. From 1934 until his retirement in 1966,²¹⁷ Thomson worked as an Evangelist for the Church of Scotland in roles organising Seaside Missions and latterly from 1949 onwards as Special Evangelist to the Home Board. He was an inspiring and dominating evangelical.²¹⁸ From 1946 to 1958, he pioneered the use of 'visitation evangelism' in a series of high profile 'campaigns' throughout Scotland.

Thomson shared with Allan a background in the United Free Church prior to the reunion with the established Kirk in 1929. Thomson confirmed in Allan the necessity of the outward-looking United Free Church missional focus, just as both Allan and Thomson were to face throughout their ministries the reticence and opposition of those within the 'Auld Kirk' to the idea of 'home mission', other than as a beneficence to slum areas. In Thomson and Fitch, Allan saw the zeal and missionary drive that was to mark his own ministry.

²¹⁵ Allan, *Why I Believe*, 5-6.

²¹⁶ He was one of the first to arrive at Thomson's student training course in evangelism in January 1946 - Bardgett, *Scotland's Evangelist*, 24. In March 1946, Allan was a member of the student team who undertook Thomson's first post-war mission campaign in the Presbytery of Melrose - See Ian Doyle, 'I Remember Tom Allan', *Life and Work*, March 1986, 25.

²¹⁷ Barring the war years when he was minister of Cambuslang Trinity, Glasgow.

²¹⁸ 'He was completely dedicated to his missionary calling in a way that made him seem almost too forceful and demanding, but he had a great capacity for affection and evoked a wonderful sense of loyalty from the many who were called to share his work' - Ian B. Doyle, 'Thomson, David Patrick (1896-1974)', *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography* (Oxford University Press, 2004) - www.oxforddnb.com/view/printable/66404.

From his Church background, the influence of Thomson and Fitch, and his conversion experience of 1945, Allan's theology was resolutely evangelical. However, unusual for his time, it was set apart by, firstly, being united with a strong passion for social transformation and, secondly, a determination to bypass theological categorisations in the name of bringing the Gospel in word and deed to ordinary people in mission.

Allan's evangelical theology was Christological. It emphasised the need for repentance. For Allan the desire to repent was the fundamental human approach to a God who required 'the sacrifice of a broken heart and a contrite spirit'. Before the cross, we make 'the only cry which God is waiting to hear 'God be merciful to me-a sinner.'"²¹⁹

Substitutory atonement was the key to our understanding of Christ's purpose:

We have rebelled against the law. Christ dies in our stead and takes the curse of the law upon Himself...By our sins we are estranged from God....Christ, in dying, pays the penalty which man cannot pay.²²⁰

Justification was by faith alone:

No human righteousness; no amount of morality, however lofty and self-sacrificing, no works of service, however striking and impressive will bring a man into the Kingdom of God. The Reformed Church believes...that we are saved by faith in Jesus Christ as God and Saviour.²²¹

Allan's approach was essentially Barthian in its concentration of the penal nature of a Cross both 'for us' and 'against us'. As in the work of P.T. Forsyth,²²² whom he often quoted, Allan's theology was of the primacy of the Cross as a restoration of righteousness out of the moral and spiritual degradation that he had witnessed in war.

As much as such assessments are always broad generalisations, can Allan's theology be categorised in its time?

²¹⁹ AA6.2.3, Sermons on Matthew, Communion, 10/05/59.

²²⁰ AA6.3.6, 'The Atonement', Sermon, 07/02/59.

²²¹ AA6.2.3, Sermons on Matthew, 26/8/56.

²²² For example, in *Justification of God: Lectures for War-Time on Christian Theodicy*, (London: Duckworth, 1916).

David Bebbington identifies a ‘centrist school’ of evangelicalism being the ‘prevailing stance in the Church of Scotland’ in the immediate aftermath of World War II, a group identified by their efforts to minimise any cleft between liberal and conservatives in the name of Protestant unity and common mission.²²³ Allan and Thomson are seen by Bebbington as being prime exemplars of such a school in Scotland, ignoring as they did theological divides in the cause of evangelism.

It is, however, difficult to restrict Allan to a particular categorisation, when one considers his admirable dedication to social justice, and his considerable commitment to international ecumenism with the World Council of Churches. Like his mentor, D.P. Thomson, Allan ‘stood apart from the various camps within the ministry’, principally due to ‘his catholicism’,²²⁴ did not practice systematic biblical exposition, and did not belong to the coterie of conservative evangelicals under William Still later to meet in 1970 as the ‘Crieff Fraternal’. Ultimately, the labels were immaterial for Allan, as he refused to be pigeon-holed in a way that would emasculate the proclamation of the Gospel message: ‘He was determined to hold the middle ground...and turn neither to the right nor to the left in the direction of extreme positions. But without a doubt the focal point for him was primacy of evangelism’.²²⁵

3.1.2 Post-War Scottish Church and Society

(a) Legacy of the Pre-War Church

Allan began his ministry in a post-war Church in Scotland which was in need of radical re-alignment in the wake of its pre-war record, and in the light of the social, economic and spiritual fallout from the destruction of war. His work was motivated to redress the distance of Christianity from the struggles of everyday life.

²²³ D.W. Bebbington, *Evangelicalism in Modern Britain: a History from the 1730s to the 1980s*, (London & New York: Unwin Hyman, 1989), 251.

²²⁴ Bardgett, *Scotland's Evangelist*, Ch. 8, 5.

²²⁵ Shannon, *Tom Allan: In a Nutshell*, 30.

As Allan began his ministry in 1946, memories were fresh of the Church of Scotland's efforts at mission in the inter-war years, particularly following the Union with the United Free Church of 1929 and during the 'hunger of the Thirties'. As Stewart J. Brown summarises that period for the Church:

During the decade between the Union of 1929 and the outbreak of the Second World War in 1939, the Church committed itself to fulfilling the hopes raised by the Union for national religion in Scotland. The Church's social policy was dominated by the attempt to achieve the ideal of a Christian society in the midst of the economic stagnation and social hardships resulting from the world depression.²²⁶

In relation to social issues, there were two distinctly unpleasant legacies of the Thirties from which Allan in his dedication to ecumenism and to the working class would distance himself: firstly, the unworthy, racist campaign against Irish immigration and the Roman Catholic Church under the goal of a Protestant Scotland, flowing from the power exerted by the Union of 1929; and, secondly, the Church of Scotland's failure to take any political stance which was critical of the government or state economic planning, instead concentrating on the moral failings of the working classes.

Allan had thus inherited an inter-war ethos on political issues in the Church of Scotland, as the historian Catriona MacDonald comments, which 'withdrew from its earlier commitment to intervention and social criticism and increasingly adopted a policy of non-interference.'²²⁷ It was an inter-war period where, in the determination of John White to rebuild a 'parish state' subsumed by ecclesiastical authority and marked by exclusive Presbyterian hegemony, as T.M. Devine puts it: 'social criticism was abandoned and instead the nation's ills were blamed once again on individual failings which could be cured only by controlling laziness, intemperance, gambling and sexual licence.'²²⁸

²²⁶ S.J. Brown, 'The Social Ideal of the Church of Scotland during the 1930's', in A.R. Morton ed., *God's Will in a Time of Crisis: The Baillie Commission in the Church of Scotland* (Edinburgh: CTPI, 1994), 14.

²²⁷ Catriona MacDonald, *Whaur Extremes Meet: Scotland's Twentieth Century*, (Edinburgh: Birlinn Limited, 2009), 278.

²²⁸ T.M. Devine, *The Scottish Nation 1700-2000*, (London, Penguin Books, 1999), 383.

It was a national Church then, in Will Storrar's words, 'dangerously out of tune not only with many social realities within Scottish society but also with some of the grace notes in its own Reformed tradition.'²²⁹

As a result, the Church of the inter-war years in the industrial heartlands of central Scotland had grown further distant during the Depression from a working class mostly already lost, and increasingly drawn to left-wing politics as a solution to the ills of the working person.

By the end of the decade, John White's vision of a 'Godly Commonwealth' had failed to materialise: 'After 1937, it was becoming increasingly clear that the ideal of the Christian commonwealth of small, closely-knit parish communities under the spiritual and moral direction of the national Church had failed to capture the imagination of the nation.'²³⁰

Therefore, 'by the end of the 1930's, it was clear that there was a need for a new Christian vision, a new social ideal,'²³¹ where visionaries such as Tom Allan and George MacLeod were to play a key role.

As the life and ministry of Tom Allan emphasised, the thrust for mission and a renewed interaction of Church with society in the immediate post-war period was still (a) of the Church, and (b) in the parish system, but with (c) the centrality of the role of the laity as the whole people of God, often broken down to (d) small units or cells, and (e) dedicated to contextualising the message to the lives of those around them.

Nevertheless, the fundamental assumption remained, as one contemporary commentator, P.D. Thomson, set out in 1948, that the parish system was still 'put forward as the best, and indeed the only, plan which can be devised whereby the community as a whole can be evangelised, brought under Christian influences, and enabled through a common fellowship to share consciously in a finer and fuller quality of community life. The age-

²²⁹ William F. Storrar, 'Liberating the Kirk: The Enduring Legacy of the Baillie Commission', A.R. Morton (ed.), *God's Will in a Time of Crisis: The Baillie Commission in the Church of Scotland*, (Edinburgh: CTPI, 1994), 60.

²³⁰ S.J. Brown, 'The Social Ideal of the Church of Scotland during the 1930's', 25.

²³¹ *Ibid*, 26.

long method of the Church has been emphatically re-affirmed.’²³² The default model for ecclesiology and mission in the immediate post-war period thus remained, ‘a defined area and community, with the Church in the midst as the spiritual power-house of the communal life.’²³³

However, the pre-War notion of what might constitute Church and mission stood in contrast to that of the post-war period. The pre-War position was of an inward looking, ordinance based Church, predicated on the assumption verging on complacency that true ‘mission’ remained a foreign territorial excursion. One need turn no further for evidence than the title of the immediate post-Union ‘Forward Movement’ manifesto, *Call to Church*²³⁴, to realise that under this schemata the ‘movement’ envisaged was for ordinary people to retrace their steps back towards an institution which had little intention of self-adaptation, and not in the other direction. Those conclusions are supported when it is considered that within the book’s contents there are three pages devoted to what is quaintly termed ‘The Home Field’ from two hundred and seventy pages overall, and passing mention as a novelty of ‘a form of evangelism which has been tried out in recent years’, being ‘Campaigns’ or ‘Intensive Missions’, described in a similar form to the ‘Mission of Friendship’ utilised by George MacLeod in Govan. By way of contrast, *Call to Church* has some one hundred and twenty nine pages devoted to foreign ‘missions’ to the Jews, India, West Africa and China.

As a result, the presentation of the Gospel in ‘mission at home’ in the pre-war period in Scotland had been broadly taken to be the task of ‘evangelism’ towards personal conversion by an intentional voicing of the Word in preaching, as opposed to its practical outpouring which would follow conversion of ‘Christian service’. Further, barring an accommodation by language translation, the ‘voicing’ was to be mono-cultural and mono-theological. In other words, it was thought capable of being expressed in unitary form in

²³² P.D. Thomson, *Parish and Parish Church: Their Place and Influence in History*, (London: Thomas Nelson & Sons Ltd, 1948), 286-7.

²³³ Ibid, 288.

²³⁴ *Call to Church: The Book of the Forward Movement of the Church of Scotland*, (Edinburgh: The Church of Scotland Offices, 1931).

any part of the country, as the Evangelist to the Home Board, D.P. Thomson, demonstrated. This attitude reflected a broad assumption that the nation was already Christianised, and that the totems, symbols and rituals of the Reformed Church had become part of the national DNA, of which every citizen would be aware from schooldays onwards. Therefore, the ‘mission’ of the home Church was essentially one of revivalism i.e. the enticement of those lapsed, baptised Christians lurking at the outer edges of Christian society back into the fold of the redeemed community.

In keeping, the oral message transmitted was ‘top-down’ culturally, theologically and ecclesially. It was engendered internally from a taught and ‘correct’ doctrinal core, and passed from the central institution outwards. It thus placed much reliance on an educated and trained clergy, emanating from divinity colleges and elevated by ordained ministry. Insofar as the proclaimed Gospel was ‘inculturated’ at all, it reflected much of the culture of power, and was presumed to remain unaffected in the transmission to the street and pulpit. This was the yawning gap which George MacLeod sought to narrow in the early intentions of the Iona Community by equipping ministers in training to work in industrialised, urban parishes, and which Allan departed from by contextualising European missiology.

Developments prior to 1945 in attitudes to the ‘contextualisation’ of the Gospel in mission to culture and the rhythm of the land and the people, were largely expressed in the ‘foreign mission field’. For some who remained in Scotland, however, foreign mission in the inter-war years also remained in a solid marriage with Western Culture, in the nature of its Gospel to be proclaimed and the purpose of ‘missions’. The view persisted in some Scottish circles of the mission ‘frontier’ as a territorial expedition beyond Christendom and civilisation towards dark, satanic lands.

For example, in his publication in 1927 for ‘The Scottish’s Layman’s Library’ under the title of *The Scottish Churches’ Work Abroad*, J.H. Morrison identified the primary purpose of Scottish foreign mission in the title of Chapter 1 as to address: ‘The Bitter Need of the Heathen World’. Tellingly, the identified ‘need’ lay not in the redemptive power of the

incarnated Christ, but in curing perceived social and cultural ills that were assumed to be the obverse reflections of a Christianised Western society.

It was of no consideration for Morrison that the cultures of the 'heathen world' which had developed over millennia in parallel to the West under other religious influences might of themselves have possessed any inherent value, nor that they may need to be recognised and at least accommodated in the propagation of Christianity by Scottish missionaries. Instead, such cultures were, by comparison, despicable in the eyes of Christ as a result of their non-Christian religious base:

In Christendom the Gospel is at war with vice and wickedness in every form; in heathenism abominable evils are wrought under the sanction of religion. It is this profaning of religion, this debasing of the highest, this desecration of the holy of holies, which constitutes the blight of heathenism. It casts its deep shadow over many lands, wrapping men's souls, in gross darkness till the very windows of heaven are obscured and the light of life is lost.²³⁵

Morrison's position serves as a classic exposition, a mere two decades before the radical Scottish missiologies upon which this thesis rests, of the four assumptions identified by Brian Stanley in the confidence of many British Christian missions in their superior attitude to indigenous cultures of the Nineteenth century:

...the belief that the cultures which missionaries were penetrating were in no sense religiously neutral-rather they were under the control of the Evil One...the supposition that nineteenth-century Britain constituted a model of Christian culture and society...the implicit faith in human progress as a legacy of the Enlightenment...[and] the pragmatic [assumption] that such efforts could be shown to have worked, as in Sierra Leone.²³⁶

These four assumptions on the Enlightened supplanting of cultural Christian values lingered too in the attitude within the Scottish nation to home mission, in particular towards the urban poor: that working-class culture was satanic, riddled with self-imposed immorality due to defects in character, intellect, racial ethnicity, education and moral fibre, and that the transmission of Christianity could be equated with the imposition of

²³⁵ J.H. Morrison, *The Scottish Churches' Work Abroad*, (Edinburgh: T&T Clark, 1927), 15.

²³⁶ Brian Stanley, *The Bible and the Flag*, (Leicester: IVP, 1990), 161-162.

decency and respectability. Thus mission to the urban poor might involve a ‘cleaning-up’ operation, whereby those in degradation would be saved by adopting another culture, and embracing human progress, without any general amelioration of social conditions.²³⁷ State intervention at a universal level to relieve poverty and suffering without a prior moral ‘means test’, or evidence of self-improvement and godliness, was to be disparaged as worthless. Thus, Thomas Chalmers would state:

The remedy against the extension of pauperism does not lie in the liberalities of the rich; it lies in the hearts and habits of the poor. There is no possible help for them if they will not help themselves. It is to a rise and reformation in the habits of our peasantry that we look for deliverance, not to the impotent crudities of a speculative legislation.²³⁸

As the political commentator Iain Macwhirter has recently written, Chalmers’s attitudes ‘...were deeply ingrained in Scottish public life. This is very much how middle-class Scots thought in the 19th, and most of the 20th century- and they were the only group that counted politically.’²³⁹

This was not, however, a reflection of much of the work then being undertaken by Scottish missionaries and teachers abroad, where a stark realisation had occurred of the necessity of concepts which would now be referred to as ‘contextualisation’ and ‘cross-cultural translation’. Allan’s work was thus a strong reaction to what had gone before at home, and, indeed, a reflection of what was being implemented in some quarters abroad.

The later Deputy Leader of the Iona Community, Ralph Morton, returned from missionary work in China in 1937. He reflected that overseas there were three principles on which mission was based: ‘the necessity of learning the language of the people’, in the sense of ‘coming to an understanding of their ways of life and thought’; ‘helping to build up a

²³⁷ There are, of course, exceptions. On the activity of the Christian Socialist Movement in the period, see, for example, Chris Bryant, *Possible Dreams: A Personal History of the British Christian Socialists* (London: Hodder & Stoughton, 1996). The book *Social Problems and the Church's Duty* (London: A&C Black, 1908), by David Watson, a minister in Glasgow’s East End, is a remarkably insightful sociological and theological analysis of the plight of the working class, calling on the Church to side with labour against capital.

²³⁸ Thomas Chalmers, *On Political Economy*, as quoted by Iain Macwhirter, *The Road to Referendum*, (Cargo Publishing: 2013), 102.

²³⁹ Ibid.

pattern of corporate Christian living which was not confined to what went on in Church buildings'; and, 'political involvement' as 'inescapably part of the Gospel.'²⁴⁰

This tradition within the Scottish missionary endeavour was reflected later in the building of the intentional cross-cultural community at Allipur by friends of those in the Gorbals Group Ministry, George and Dorothy More,²⁴¹ and more broadly in the work of David Lyon, both in India at Nagpur and Allipur and later as General Secretary of the Church of Scotland Overseas Council from 1972 onwards.²⁴²

By 1978, Lyon could write that 'when we speak of entering another's world in mission, we are speaking of an approach to mission, which affects every aspect of our life. We have to speak the language of those among whom we live — and that not just in the narrowly linguistic sense; we have to live at their tempo; be moved by the images and symbols that move them; and we have to rethink... our basic understandings, in response to their needs and insights.'²⁴³

This is precisely the understanding that had occurred to Allan in the late Forties, and shaped also the work of the Gorbals Group Ministry and the lay ecumenism of Ian Fraser at Scottish Churches House considered below.

On his return from China in 1937, in relation to his 'three principles' Ralph Morton was struck that:

The Church at home did not seem to recognise these principles at all...It seemed to think that all it had to do was recall people to religion and to preach morality...It

²⁴⁰ T. Ralph Morton, *The Iona Community: Personal Impressions of the Early Years*, (Edinburgh: Saint Andrew Press, 1977), 10-11.

²⁴¹ See George More & Mary More, *This is Our Life in Central India*, (London: Edinburgh House Press, 1962).

²⁴² See David H.S. Lyon, *In Pursuit of a Vision: The Story of the Church of Scotland's Relationship with the Churches Emerging from the Missionary Movement in the Twenty-Five Years from 1947 to 1972*, (Edinburgh: Saint Andrew Press, 1998).

²⁴³ *How Foreign is Mission?*, (Edinburgh: St Andrew Press, 1978), 60.

was very interested in its own language and in the language of the past... It was not interested in the language that people outside were using.²⁴⁴

Morton contended that the reason for the Church speaking in a 'secret, archaic language' was that 'it was not really concerned with the life that its members were living in the world... The life of the Church was limited to activities that went on in Church buildings and sometimes in the houses of members. But such activities were mainly confined to the promotion of ecclesiastical interests and the discussion of private duty.' He concluded that 'to a returned missionary this sounded not only strange but blasphemous.'²⁴⁵

There was, thus, an increasing comprehension filtering from abroad to the home Church: that the cross-cultural experience of foreign mission, its relationship to everyday life, the building of community and the social and political consequences of the Gospel, highlighted comparative deficiencies in the Scottish Church.²⁴⁶

This realisation began to alter the attitudes to the Gospel and mission of the home Church, and to reshape the approach to the interaction of Gospel and culture in Scotland. For present purposes, we can begin to recognise, in the work of Allan and beyond, the dawning of the realisation that such concerns were not confined only to foreign mission climes, but required also the 'translation' of the Gospel in Scotland from the clergy to those on the streets, and the organic growth of 'indigenous' Church structures, particularly in urban, industrialised areas.

²⁴⁴ Morton, *The Iona Community: Personal Impressions of the Early Years*, 11.

²⁴⁵ Ibid, 11-12.

²⁴⁶ Other examples include (a) Rev. D.D. Mackichan, Principal of Wilson College, Bombay and former Vice-Chancellor of its University - *The Missionary Ideal in the Scottish Churches* (London: Hodder & Stoughton, 1927) - 'the real goal of all missionary effort - a self-supporting, self-governing and self-propagating indigenous Christian Church', 226-227; (b) Rev John Anderson Graham, founder of orphanages in Kalimpong, and when Moderator of the Church of Scotland, a respect for Hinduism as showing 'a deeply religious sense on the part of many of their need for the fellowship of God, by whatever name he may be called', foreword to *The Call to the Church: The Book of the Forward Movement*, (Edinburgh: The Church of Scotland Offices, 1931), 158; and (c) Alfred George Hogg, for thirty-six years principal of Madras Christian College, who explored the potential of cross-cultural osmosis, through 'the exploration of the effect that India would have on Christian theology', by rethinking the atonement through the doctrine of karma - see 'The Scottish Missionary Diaspora', Chapter 14 within Andrew Walls, *The Cross- Cultural Process in Christian History* (Edinburgh: T&T Clark, 1996), 271.

What does discussion of the realisation of ‘cross-cultural translation’ and ‘contextualisation’ teach us now in the quest towards an understanding of the applicability of such concepts in mission within Scotland?

Ian Fraser underlines the answer in his 1969 book, *Let's Get Moving*, in the process identifying the distinction between the ‘revivalism’ of the pre-war period and the work of such as Billy Graham, as against the true expanse of post-war ‘mission’, echoing views which Allan would have shared (my emphasis):

It is becoming clear that the action of the missionary overseas who has to leave known territory for unknown, learn another language which is the language of the people to whom he ministers, and get under the skin of a different culture - applies as much in Scotland as anywhere else.

Revivalism has to do with taking committed people as they are, pressing them towards greater conviction and commitment, and drawing others in so that the community grows on the edges, absorbing newcomers into much the same ethos.

Mission, on the other hand, has to do with leaving safe territory, grappling to understand alien thought-forms, learning a language which communicates. Mission is now being recognised as being no longer a basically territorial activity. Even in territorial aspects the need is to make contact with people...in places which are not on Church premises or where religious meetings are held. The need is seen to learn a language which communicates to contemporaries and to wrestle with their thought-forms so that it is possible for mind to meet mind because person meets person.²⁴⁷

The pertinence of this discussion is that the Church in Scotland over recent decades has slid backwards in its appreciation of mission, so that it now stands perilously close to falling foul of the very condemnations that Morton wrote of in relation to the Church in 1937, and being guilty of relying not on ‘mission’ in its true sense as set out by Fraser, but the narrow ‘revivalism’ that he also describes. It may be that only by becoming alert once more to those issues that a path can be found towards the solution.

²⁴⁷ Ian M. Fraser, *Let's Get Moving: A Plea for Church Revolution in Scotland*, (Edinburgh: The Scottish Churches' Council, 1969), 60-61.

(b) Post-War Society

Allan's work was carried out in a post-War period where Scottish Christianity had the drive and resources to rise to the challenge of contextualising the Church through the laity, and Scottish society was ready to hear the message.

Whilst, in A.C. Cheyne's view, 'the Second World War was possibly less of a shock to organised religion than the first had been', nevertheless 'the effect on the life of the Churches, as on that of society as a whole, was to undermine still further what certainty and stability remained after all the social and intellectual upheavals of the previous three or four generations.'²⁴⁸

To this negative instability was added the positive remnant of a communal civilian experience in the Second World War which had differed from the First. As Duncan Forrester has commented:

Paradoxically, the sufferings of the civilian population in the blitz seemed to create a new and hospitable sense of community. And, in comparison with the Great War, the issues at stake seemed to almost everyone to be crucial and clear-cut – an impression which was strengthened as details of the Holocaust and of Hitler's apocalyptic strategy became generally known.²⁴⁹

The war had thus set the ground for a receptive mood in the population for a Scottish Christianity which might provide a coherent social ideal with a vision of new, fairer society.

The effect of World War II and the Cold War had further 'revived a flagging sense of national identity', imbuing national Churches with a role in 'rebuilding moral and spiritual foundations after the horrors of Nazism' and in the face of the threat of Communism. This

²⁴⁸ A.C. Cheyne, *The Transforming of the Kirk: Victorian Scotland's Religious Revolution*, (Edinburgh: Saint Andrew Press, 1983), 186.

²⁴⁹ Duncan B. Forrester, *Theology in the Shadow of War: The Baird Lectures as Contextual Theology*, Baird Trust Lecture: 31 October 2007, as reproduced at www.bairdtrust.org.uk.

was aligned with a ‘desire to return to ‘normal’ after all the disruption, encouraging a social conservatism.²⁵⁰

The zeitgeist was therefore to build a new society from the wreckage, but not in fulfillment of a utopian ideal that might be drawn from a liberal theology endorsing the inevitable march of Christian progress. For as Tom Allan told his audience in a 1953 lecture in North Carolina, the stark realisation of the monsters that ‘civilisation’ had created led to a new sense of urgency amongst Christians that only the reconciling peace and love of Christ could provide an answer : ‘Instead of Utopia, we got Belsen. Instead of Land of Heart’s Desire, we got Buchenwald and the gas-chambers of Auschwitz. The release of atomic energy which could revolutionise life is reserved for its destruction.’²⁵¹

Meanwhile, within society the basis for evangelisation remained in place in terms of the Church’s locus to speak in public life. Christianity was entitled as the natural assumption of most people to hold a central and rightful place in public discourse in a ‘Christian country’, creating a ‘willing ear’, as the social historian Hugh MacLeod reflects:

In the 1940’s and 1950’s, it was still possible to think of western Europe and North America as ‘Christendom’, in the sense that there were close links between religious and secular elites, that most children were socialized into membership of a Christian society, and that the Church had a large presence in fields such as education and welfare, and a major influence on law and morality.²⁵²

There was therefore an alliance of social circumstances which set the ground for a revival of Christianity, particularly for mission centred on the realities of the everyday lives of ordinary people, as post-war hope allied with Cold War fear attuned to a new desire of social togetherness and communal safety. Frank Bardgett thus suggests of D.P. Thomson’s work that ‘the success of North Kelvinside and the other estate and suburban campaigns may have had less to do with the techniques employed and more with the desire of their

²⁵⁰ Hugh MacLeod, *The Religious Crisis of the 1960’s*, (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2007), 45.

²⁵¹ AA6.2.13 – Ashlin White Bible Lectures 1953, Mooresville, North Carolina – *Christian Witness in the Secular World, 1. The Failure of Human Resources*, 7-8.

²⁵² Hugh MacLeod, *The Religious Crisis of the 1960’s*, 31.

post-war populations for the stability of belonging: at any rate to social as well as spiritual factors.²⁵³

In the west of Scotland, these broad influences were further enhanced by a time of economic uncertainty, with the imminent decline of heavy industry and the shift of economic power towards the United States. As Christopher Harvie states: 'It was no secret that the root cause of the nation's problems lay in its economic structure', with its 'overdependence on heavy industry', which was accurately felt to 'have a limited shelf-life.'²⁵⁴ The United Kingdom was bankrupt following the war, with food rationing in place until July 1954. The military war demand and Empire markets were waning. The Scottish economy was in a state of flux. By the early Fifties, it was clear that urban poverty and class divisions had persisted, despite the implementation of the Welfare State.

The first steps towards the re-alignment of the Church had been taken in Scotland during the war. Ground-breaking reports were presented to the General Assembly by the Commission for the *Interpretation of God's Will in the Present Crisis* (1940-45), known as the 'Baillie Commission',²⁵⁵ after its chairman, the eminent theologian John Baillie. The Commission had castigated a Church which was 'complacently accepting the amenities, and availing ourselves of the privileges, of a social order which happened to offer these things to ourselves while denying them to others... There can be no doubt that it is to the failure of Christians to realise and act upon these social implications of the Gospel that the present weakness of the spiritual life of our land must in no small part be attributed.'²⁵⁶

²⁵³ Bardgett, *Scotland's Evangelistic*. 7, 51. The experience in Scotland was echoed in America, where 'the years between about 1945 and 1960 were known as the time of a 'religious revival', 'a notable turn to religion'. The three main influences towards the American revival identified by Hugh MacLeod are clearly apposite to Scotland too: 'the fear of nuclear annihilation', 'a resulting decline in faith in progress, and a corresponding vogue for the Neo-Orthodox theologians', and 'the impact of popular preachers like the evangelist Billy Graham.' Hugh MacLeod, *The Religious Crisis of the 1960's*, 34-35.

²⁵⁴ Christopher Harvie, *No Gods and Precious Few Heroes: Scotland 1914-1980*, (Edward Arnold, London: 1981), 203.

²⁵⁵ Centred upon 'The Report on the Will of God for our Time', a report to the General Assembly of 1945, edited by John Baillie, and published as *God's Will for Church and Nation* (London: SCM Press, 1946).

²⁵⁶ As quoted at Cheyne, *The Transforming of the Kirk*, 192.

Will Storrar argues that ‘the Baillie Commission saved the Church of Scotland from itself and for the Gospel’.²⁵⁷ From the dark days of the late Thirties, its ‘genius was to liberate the Kirk from that false vision and to bring it intellectually and theologically into its own time.’²⁵⁸

The publication of a Joint Church of Scotland Committee’s Report *Into All the World* at Easter 1946²⁵⁹ recognised that as a result an urgent regeneration of mission was required in the vastly altered social and economic context:

There are... special periods of social change and crisis when it becomes necessary for the Church to review and reconsider the whole task and technique of the evangelistic enterprise. We are living at present through such a period of transition... The changes in the social environment, outlook and manner of life of the people in this country are so vast that some of the older methods of religious work have been inevitably outmoded, while others call for careful adaptation to new conditions. The eternal gospel remains itself unchanged, but it requires to be proclaimed in a new idiom, and presented in new ways and in fresh channels.²⁶⁰

The move towards a new form of community and parish structure, focusing on the role of the laity, was championed from diverse areas of Scottish Church life. The Iona Community was at the forefront. From Ralph Morton’s perspective within the Iona Community, ‘It is the duty of Christians today to make experiments in co-operative social living which will point the way to this new living society.’²⁶¹

As early as 1944, Ralph Morton had expressed that ‘we have to be prepared to scrap much that is dear and familiar in our life and worship for the sake of building up into a new and living fellowship those who do not speak our language.’²⁶² In his pamphlet of 1953 for the World Council of Churches entitled *Evangelism in Scotland Today*²⁶³, Morton

²⁵⁷ Storrar, ‘Liberating the Kirk: The Enduring Legacy of the Baillie Commission’, 60.

²⁵⁸ Ibid.

²⁵⁹ Church of Scotland Committee on Evangelism, *Into all The World: A Statement of Evangelism*, (Glasgow: McCorquodale & Company Ltd, 1946), Preamble.

²⁶⁰ *Into All The World: A Statement of Evangelism*, Foreword, 9. Ronald Falconer suggests that ‘in some ways, ‘Into All the World’ provided a blueprint for the widespread efforts in evangelism which were to follow immediately on the cessation of World War II’- *Message Media Mission: The Baird Lectures 1975*, (Edinburgh: St Andrew Press, 1977), 84.

²⁶¹ T. Ralph Morton, *Household of Faith*, (Glasgow: The Iona Community, 1951), 104.

²⁶² T. Ralph Morton, *Missionary Principles for the Home Front* (Glasgow: Iona Youth Trust, 1944), 11.

²⁶³ T. Ralph Morton, *Evangelism in Scotland Today*, (Geneva: World Council of Churches, 1953) & Tell Scotland Booklet No.2.

declared Scotland no more to be a Christian country and advocated a fresh approach to home mission centred on the basics of the faith as related to modern, industrial life. In keeping with the Iona Community approach to mission, he commended that the connection with the lives of ordinary people must be made through the efforts of local congregation, not the clergy or special evangelist at a mass meeting. Rallies and campaigns were widely asserted to be of a departed era, as they failed to relate to the needs of the man in the street. Morton wrote in 1944: 'the old evangelism is past...we know that already.'²⁶⁴

Donald Baillie contributed an article to *The Coracle* in 1951, where he set out his view that the days of the visiting evangelist were over, to be replaced by the Iona model of 'parish missions', by which: 'The congregation itself should be the evangelising agent in its parish. That is what it is there for-to be its own missionary...to be an active witness to Christ in its own bit of the world.'²⁶⁵

Other notable figures drew similar conclusions to Allan, Morton and Baillie on the identity of those within the congregation who would be called. As one of four pamphlets under the grouping of *The New Evangelism*, Nevile Davidson wrote of *The Parish Church* in 1947 that 'it is...valuable to have special 'cells' or groups of men and women within a congregation who feel themselves specially called to the work of evangelism.'²⁶⁶

The sense of 'winning' the remaining un-churched was palpable and the goal seemingly within grasp. Those leading the immediate post-war society, in both nation and Church, had emerged from wartime service with a mentality which was attuned to organisation, discipline, unflagging effort, and campaigns of large-scale endeavour. That mentality was to become allied to an ecclesiastical superstructure which was still of a scale that was capable of exuding power and confidence to significant effect.

²⁶⁴ Morton, *Missionary Principles for the Home Front*, 10.

²⁶⁵ *The Coracle*, No.19, January 1951, 10.

²⁶⁶ Nevile Davidson, *The Parish Church*, (Edinburgh: New Evangelism Series, 1947), 7.

There was reason for optimism that the result of evangelistic endeavour would be significant increases in Christian adherence, given the vast human and financial resources which the Churches could call upon. Despite a drop in comparison with a pre-war peak of 1926, the figures for communicant membership in the largest denomination, the Church of Scotland, were still buoyant and rising, at 1.26 million in 1946.²⁶⁷ As Highet demonstrated in 1950, even with the doubts and worries, there remained a 'Church-minded nation.'²⁶⁸

To add to this social and economic mix, and the desire for change both within the Church and broader society, was required the inspiration and vision of leadership. There was broad consensus between the key players such as Allan and MacLeod that the ultimate goal of post-war mission was the rescue of Church and nation by a rediscovery of the true embodiment of Christian *koinonia*. Their common focus was the building of Kingdom communities from the base of existing Church structures, utilising the laity as the instigators. The communities would be founded on the Gospel and exhibit hallmarks of ceaseless mission and service to broader society.

R.D. Kernohan rightly places Allan at the heart of this rebirth of Scotland's national Church activity in the fifteen years after the war:

There was a new burst of evangelistic enthusiasm to reassure those who feared this active Kirk might be spiritually lifeless....Scotland found another very attractive evangelical saint with an intense social conscience in a Glasgow minister called Tom Allan...²⁶⁹

Set against a needy and receptive social backdrop, caught in the heady optimism of the times, and driven by inspirational figures such as Allan, Thomson and MacLeod, the

²⁶⁷ The figures for the preceding decades in the Church of Scotland had indicated the following: 1901 – 1,163,594, 1911 – 1,219,587, 1921 – 1,277,634, 1926 – 1,298,355, 1931 – 1,280,620, 1941 – 1,268,839, 1945 – 1,259,927, 1946 – 1,261,646. – Highet, *The Churches in Scotland Today*, 72.

²⁶⁸ Highet, *The Churches in Scotland Today*, 79.

²⁶⁹ R.D. Kernohan, 'Postscript: The Kirk Since 1929' in John Buchan, *The Kirk in Scotland*, (1930), reprinted by (Dunbar: Labarum Publications, 1985), 151.

Churches responded on a dramatic scale, manifested in the audacious goals of ‘Tell Scotland’. Sociologist John Highet could justifiably reflect in 1960:

The period since the end of the Second World War has seen evangelistic activities on a scale which in extent and variety must surely be unprecedented in the history of the Scottish Churches. That very fact, indeed, may well be thought to be the outstanding feature of Scottish Church life in the mid-twentieth century.²⁷⁰

3.1.3 Like-Minded Contemporaries - George MacLeod and the Iona Community

There were clear parallels between Allan’s practice and the recent life of the Church in Scotland which served as key influences upon him, albeit he intensified their work in scale and impact.

Allan believed that he was following what Thomas Chalmers had begun in his campaign of ‘aggressive visitation’ in Glasgow from 1819, writing that ‘he carried out a mission to his parish which was an absolutely new departure in missionary strategy, and anticipated by more than a century the very things for which ‘Tell Scotland’ stands today. Parish Mission began with Thomas Chalmers in St John’s.’²⁷¹

He recognised also the debt to the words and work of John White whilst in the parish of Shettleston in 1901. White wrote to his people in surprisingly similar terms to Allan:

There is a need of an organised effort being made to bridge the gulf between the Church and the lapsed masses in our large towns and cities; the one question is how? We do not disparage the old method and policy of the Church...we require to readjust our methods...We must supplement the regular army of the ministry with the volunteer efforts of the laity.²⁷²

²⁷⁰ Highet, *The Scottish Churches*, 70.

²⁷¹ ‘Thomas Chalmers and the Disruption’, AA6.5.8.

²⁷² *Shettleston Parish Magazine*, April 1901, Vol 11, No 4, ‘The City and the Church’, Papers of John White, Box 95, New College Library, University of Edinburgh.

White formed a lay group from the congregation named the ‘Septuagint’, limited to seventy men who carried out ‘visitation evangelism’ two-by-two. It had the goal of ‘the evangelisation of the whole parish.’²⁷³ As White’s biographer suggests, ‘the motto on its banner might have been ‘Tell Shettleston’ as it was an early prototype of the ‘Tell Scotland’ movement.’²⁷⁴

Writing in 1960, Allan referred to the ‘Septuagint’ practising ‘visitation evangelism’ in Shettleston and acknowledged that White ‘was conducting Parish missions fifty years in advance of their time.’²⁷⁵

On the method of implementation of his model which he had championed with D.P. Thomson, Allan further acknowledged, ‘there is nothing new in the technique of house-to-house visitation in parochial evangelism.’²⁷⁶ Not only had White employed the method, Allan knew that it had ‘in America...been worked out in the past thirty years with devastating thoroughness.’²⁷⁷

The parallels in theory and method with the parish mission of the Iona Community are clear. For twenty years, Tom Allan enjoyed a fractious but always respectful relationship with the founder of the Iona Community, George MacLeod. On the 21st anniversary of the founding of the Iona Community, Allan wrote in the *Evening Citizen*:

For my own part, I have never been, am not now and-so far as I can see- never will be a member of the Iona Community. Yet I thank God for George MacLeod.

Like every revolutionary in the Church’s history, he inspires among his colleagues either devotion or opposition. But never apathy or indifference.

You may disagree with him, but you can never ignore him. And his insistent emphasis during the past twenty years on the integration of faith and ordinary life, his brilliant insights into so much that is hypocritical or bogus in conventional

²⁷³ May 1901, *ibid*.

²⁷⁴ Augustus Muir, *John White*, (London: Hodder and Stoughton, 1958), 42.

²⁷⁵ AA6.5.8, ‘Landmarks of the Kirk, 4. John White-Reunion and Extension’, 10.

²⁷⁶ *FOMP*, 20.

²⁷⁷ For its use in the USA in the 1920’s, see A. Earl Kernahan, *Visitation Evangelism: Its Methods and Results*, (New York: Fleming H. Revell Company, 1925) & *Adventures in Visitation Evangelism*, (New York: Fleming H. Revell Company, 1928).

religion, his pleading for the underprivileged-all these have compelled us to re-examine our faith against the background of life, and have driven some of us back for the first time to a real study of the Word of God.²⁷⁸

In turn, MacLeod liked Allan, but became distant from him over the change of direction in 'Tell Scotland' through the invitation to Billy Graham in 1954/55, as MacLeod's biographer Ron Ferguson reflects: 'There is no doubt that George MacLeod was disappointed in what he saw as the individualistic direction taken by Tom Allan, whose zeal for Christ he admired.'²⁷⁹ Underlying MacLeod's admiration was a frustration at Allan's refusal to be held down by one wing of Christianity, but to endorse both salvationism and social justice in equal measure as essential components of Christian mission. As Allan's close friend Andy Moyes recalled, 'George MacLeod was to say of him, 'Tom Allan has a pain in the groin through having a foot in both camps!'²⁸⁰

They were, however, closely linked in their passion for the Christian faith and social justice:

Few have proclaimed the power of the Gospel to transform lives as Tom Allan and George MacLeod. Few also have had such passionate concern for the social implications of the Gospel...Tom's concern was as much with discipleship and service, as with rebirth.²⁸¹

Moreover, the connections in their early models of parish mission are readily identifiable. George MacLeod was 'a fanatic for the Church', wanting to purge it to its 'life- and world-changing potential.'²⁸² He was Moderator of the General Assembly of the Church of Scotland in 1957, and for many years from 1958 the Chairman of the Church Extension Committee of the Home Board during its height, planting traditional models of Church in the rapidly expanding peripheral housing developments in Scotland's cities.

Ralph Morton wrote in 1956, in words that now seem incongruous, 'The Iona Community exists to further the Mission of the Church.'²⁸³ From 1938 until the rebuilding of Iona

²⁷⁸ AA6.11.2, EC, 04/07/59.

²⁷⁹ Ferguson, *George MacLeod*, 271-272.

²⁸⁰ Andy Moyes, 'The Face of My (Missionary) Parish', *Life and Work*, August 1990, 16.

²⁸¹ James A. Simpson, 'Faith and Works', *Life and Work*, October 1990, 19.

²⁸² Frank Bardgett, *Scotland's Evangelist: D.P. Thomson, A New Biography*, (Edinburgh: Handsel Press, 2010), 170.

²⁸³ T. Ralph Morton, 'The House Church: The Next Step? Or a First Step?', *The Coracle*, March 1956, No 28, 1-8, 5.

Abbey was completed in 1965, the very essence of the Iona Community was parish mission. This was a reflection for Morton of 'the Iona Community as George MacLeod saw it at the beginning – a practical scheme for the training of young ministers. And this is how he continued to see it...There is no question that it was for this purpose that the Iona Community was originally founded.'²⁸⁴

Parish mission was inherent both in the purpose of a brotherhood of ministry candidates being made fit for urban parishes through their summer work with the tradesmen in the rebuilding of Iona Abbey, and in the parish 'Missions of Friendship'. Therefore, as Ralph Morton recalled:

When at the beginning...George MacLeod expounded the aims of the new community, he did so in terms of the renewal of the parish. In the fifties this was still the dominant idea. When members talked about experiments it was to experiments in the parish that they usually referred...²⁸⁵

MacLeod's mission plan was therefore concerned with the renovation of Church life, reiterated as a starting point in his manifesto of the Community, *We Shall Rebuild*: 'in the world as it is there appears a primary demand...It is that the Church must be turned around.'²⁸⁶ The Church and its surrounding society would begin to merge, the Church to act as a beacon of Christian community, and thus the means by which the wider public would be evangelised. It was rolling exponential growth which he anticipated.

MacLeod wrote in *We Shall Rebuild*, that 'if the Church is to leaven the Lump of the world,'²⁸⁷ it would do so by a 'Message of Friendship' which '...will be quite unlike the sudden coming of a complete stranger...to pour forth in a concentrated week a series of rather astonishing sentences in which the word Salvation appears a remarkable number of times.'²⁸⁸

²⁸⁴ T. Ralph Morton, *The Iona Community: Personal Impressions of the Early Years*, (Edinburgh: Saint Andrew Press, 1977), 110.

²⁸⁵ Ibid, 91.

²⁸⁶ George MacLeod, *We Shall Rebuild*, (Glasgow: The Iona Community, 1946), 11.

²⁸⁷ As quoted by Ferguson, *George MacLeod*, 99.

²⁸⁸ Ibid, 107.

Instead, he advocated the following successive steps in a parish mission:

1. Visitation by the congregation
2. A census
3. Mission to the households in the parish with no Church connection, imparting Christian literature and invitations to social gatherings; and
4. 'It is then – but only then- possible to envisage a week of meetings in the Church, with an outside missionary.'²⁸⁹

MacLeod's thinking in 1946 was related to his practice in the Govan 'Mission of Friendship' in 1933-34. This parish Church focus would thus call 'Iona Men' to widely implement 'Missions of Friendship' in urban parishes in the Forties and Fifties, particularly in the new housing areas created by slum clearance, but seeking to integrate also within the parish a desire to witness in the House Church Movement, and in political action and industrial mission.²⁹⁰

George MacLeod's model of a 'Mission of Friendship', as lived out in his Govan ministry from 1933-4 onwards,²⁹¹ and thereafter transposed by the Iona Community post-war to other urban parishes, bears a remarkable resemblance to Tom Allan's early missiology, with its emphasis on lay action and visitation. Ferguson's view is that Allan's missiology at North Kelvinside was 'influenced by the Iona mission of friendship model,'²⁹² an

²⁸⁹ Ibid, 108-109.

²⁹⁰ As for the House Church Movement, see Ernest W. Southcott, *The Parish Comes Alive*, (London, A.R. Mowbray & Co Ltd, 1956) and in relation to the promotion and enactment of the Movement by the Iona Community: T. Ralph Morton, 'The House Church: The Next Step? Or a First Step?', *The Coracle*, March 1956, No 28, 1-8; W.D. Cattnach, 'The House Church', *British Weekly*, July 26, 1956; David C. Orr, *The House Church*, (Glasgow: Iona Community, 1961); and an interesting comparison of the House Church Movement with the Bible Study programme of the East Harlem Protestant Parish by Douglas N. Alexander, *A Comparison between Two Systems of Church Life: An Account of the House Church Movement and the Bible-Study Group scheme of the Church of the Ascension, East Harlem Protestant Parish*, CC 205, Term Paper, May 1960, for Prof. Webber, within Box 26 'Student Files', in the East Harlem Protestant Parish Archive, Union Seminary, New York.

²⁹¹ In turn, taken from a parish mission in Portsmouth in 1912.

²⁹² Ferguson, *George MacLeod*, 270.

opinion which is reinforced by repeated references to that model and to *We Shall Rebuild* within *The Face of My Parish*.²⁹³

Therefore, as regards the concentration on the possibilities of saving the Church by developing new forms of socially-aware community, and in utilising visitation by the congregation as a method of establishing contact with those in the parish, Allan was in tune with the missionary aims of the Iona Community, which in Allan's time had gained a mark of security by its integration within the auspices of the national Church.²⁹⁴ Tom Allan for his part was also firmly a man of the people, committed to social welfare as an intimate relation to an embodied faith in Christ. So where was the point of departure between Allan and Macleod?

Despite their common ground on the goal of a transformed community, and on some of the methods of mission, there remained an underlying difference in emphasis on how to attain that goal. Both men accepted the need for a personal conversion and commitment to faith, and also for social witness. Allan, though, would come to require the first as a prerequisite of the second. This conditional approach would later allow Allan to amend his opposition to mass evangelism as an acceptable tool towards the 'new community', as he believed it likely to create or reinforce the conversion experience and inspire the laity towards mission.

Conversely, MacLeod warned against 'an extractionist salvation',²⁹⁵ which would draw the convert out of the world, as if being removed from a swamp. From his perspective, the involvement of the individual with social and political reality was part of the formative conversion experience, not attainable solely by an alteration of the spiritual state. The formation of the new community would run concurrently with conversion and commitment, not the latter in separation from the former as a mass evangelist would propose.

²⁹³ For example, reference to both appears at 98.

²⁹⁴ The Iona Community was integrated within the structures of the Church of Scotland by the General Assembly of 1951.

²⁹⁵ Ferguson, *George MacLeod*, 272.

In the 'Report of Committee Anent Iona Community' to the General Assembly of May 1955, six weeks after the All-Scotland Crusade, MacLeod resumed the attack upon it, stating that it is:

...very dangerous to demand a precisely dated conversion or to prescribe a single type of experience...the responsibility of the Church is not merely to men as individuals, but to men in their total life-in their occupations, in their social groupings, in their political life.²⁹⁶

The 1956 General Assembly report of the Iona Community under MacLeod's convenorship confronted the direction in which 'Tell Scotland' was headed:

The problem can be focused in the question—which is nearest scripture as the *fons et origo* of mission: the converted individual or the divine society that is the Body of our Lord.²⁹⁷

This split in emphasis between MacLeod and Allan was well known to them both, and had been apparent from an early meeting at Community House, as mutual friend John Sim recalled:

I knew that Tom...had fire in his belly about peace and justice, and I knew, too, that many had been converted under George. I felt deeply that the two had more in common than most people thought. So I sat back and watched and prayed as the two joined battle. Both agreed on the implications of the faith, and Tom was as left-wing as George having come from a poor working class home. But Tom insisted that in order to work out the political implications of the faith, one must first be a Christian. To spell out the implications to the unconverted was a waste of time. George insisted that unless one took the 'one way' he had outlined, one could not become a real Christian. So the two parted.²⁹⁸

Allan was firmly a man of the people, committed to social welfare as an intimate relation to an embodied faith in Christ. However, in words which reflected the dispute between Allan and MacLeod, Allan asserted in the aftermath of the Graham Crusade that

²⁹⁶ RGA 1955, 739.

²⁹⁷ RGA 1956, 740-741.

²⁹⁸ Ferguson, *George MacLeod*, 271.

individuals would have ‘no prophetic word to speak to the age, and no relevant social witness to make, *unless ...they are converted men.*’²⁹⁹

The Church’s ‘primary task’ was therefore not ‘to change the social structures in which we live’,³⁰⁰ but instead to bring the Gospel to those outwith the Church, to evangelise first in the sense of winning souls by a personal salvation. Allan did value social action *per se*, but saw its main utility, like much else, as ‘an absolute pre-condition for effective evangelism.’³⁰¹ This was ‘cause and effect’ missiology as it relates to social justice, salvation first and social action as a result, which was common in evangelical circles at least until the Lausanne gathering in 1974.

Whilst that distinction was trivial at their early meeting described by Sim, when the power balance reflected Allan as a parish minister and MacLeod as an esteemed Church leader, it would become central to the very future of the Church when Allan assumed control of Church direction beyond even that of MacLeod.

Indeed, even in the early days of ‘Tell Scotland’, given the broad consensus on the goal, theological nuances within a broadly similar model of mission may have seemed relatively esoteric from such an optimistic vantage point. In the event, it was such shades of conviction that were to determine the path of the key decisions on the national stage over the immediately succeeding years. Quietened by the initial optimism, that division was to influence the course and success of the greatest evangelistic campaign in Scottish history, and therefore the future direction of the Church in Scotland.

²⁹⁹ Allan, ed., *Crusade in Scotland...Billy Graham*, 111 (my emphasis).

³⁰⁰ AA6.5.2, *EC*, 14/02/61.

³⁰¹ AA6.2.18, Speech on ‘Social Service’ Night, General Assembly, 25/05/60.

3.1.4 European Influences on Allan's Missiology – Abbé Godin and *La France, Pays de Mission*?

Acutely aware of the need to communicate to those in his working class parish from whom he felt distanced by his theological education, social standing and his very attire, Allan found a vital resource from international developments of contextual mission amongst the rank and file of society.

To his mix of personal and national influences, Allan thus added a broad reading of new European missiology that was mainly translated into English in the period from 1947 to 1949. The ideas Allan wrote of in 1953 in *The Face of My Parish* were not identified conveniently for publication. As Will Storrar comments, *The Face of My Parish* demonstrated that 'Allan was deeply read in the kind of European theology which fostered such a Trinitarian and yet also socially contextualized approach.'³⁰²

In 1946 to 1953, Allan was both pre-empting and swiftly applying his reading to the local context: 'The North Kelvinside parish visitors that Allan trained went on to discover for themselves what Bonhoeffer and Ellul and Michonneau affirmed, that God was already at work in the lives of local people.'³⁰³

It is plain that from the beginning in his parish ministry, Allan had been imbuing contemporaneously translated theology, studying movements of the laity across Europe, and translating their ideas to his doorstep in North Kelvinside.

During his ministry in North Kelvinside, Allan set out his interpretation of these influences in a speech to a 'Retreat' on the 'The Congregational Group: Its Significance and Its Task',³⁰⁴ demonstrating in its course his broad knowledge and contextual grasp of

³⁰² William F. Storrar, 'A Tale of Two Paradigms: Mission in Scotland from 1946', Chapter 4 within D. Searle, ed., *Death or Glory: Studies Honouring The Contribution of Dr Geoffrey Grogan to the Church / The Church's Mission in Scotland's Changing Society*, (Fearn, Ross-shire: Christian Focus Publications), 63.

³⁰³ Ibid.

³⁰⁴ Speech given c.1950/51. His handwritten verbatim notes are within the Tom Allan Archive at AA6.5.6.

contemporary developments in mission and European theology. He had taken his admiration of the work of Emil Brunner from his mentor at Trinity College, Professor J.G. Riddell. Now he had added to it, in an exciting, vital exposition, the impact on Scotland of Bonhoeffer, Ellul, Michonneau, Perrin and Godin and Daniel.

Allan was acutely aware in the late Forties of the air of crisis that was apparent throughout Europe, with a consequent urgency of the laity to express themselves in immediate mission and discipleship, distant from an overbearing reliance on institutions.

In the 'Retreat' speech, Allan identified strongly with the alienation of the pastor from the people by quoting Dillard's classic passage from *The Priest and the Proletariat*:

What was I to do, what was I to say to them? I felt that I was a stranger to them- that I belonged to another culture. My Latin, my liturgy, my theology, my prayers, my priestly duties – all cut me off from them and made me a being apart.³⁰⁵

In 'formalism', Allan attacked inaccessible liturgy, which he blamed partly on the 'Protestant orthodoxy connected with the name of Karl Barth', and their tendency to 'deny that there is a problem of communication'. In 'individualism', his particular enemy to the 'modern situation' was 'pietistic evangelicalism' which had no concern for social and political issues.³⁰⁶

Allan looked towards 'two main pioneering experiments claiming the attention of the Church today'. Inspiration was to be drawn, firstly, from 'the courageous efforts which many priests and ministers of the Church have been making – particularly in Europe and in the mission field- to get alongside the worker in his own environment and against his own background', which had led to a 'new understanding of problems of the common life.'³⁰⁷

³⁰⁵ Ibid.

³⁰⁶ Ibid.

³⁰⁷ Ibid.

Allan was referring in part to the ‘worker-priest movement’ in Germany and France, whereby mission was embodied by clergy through working in factories and mines.³⁰⁸ Flourishing until 1954 when it was suffocated by the Vatican, and led by the work of Cardinal Suhard, and Henri Perrin, it fundamentally challenged the relevance and capability of the parish structure in the urban context.³⁰⁹

However, Allan’s true heroes did not abandon the parish structure in favour of incarnational witness like the worker-priests, but sought instead its internal transformation. His main influence was the French priests Henri Godin and Yvan Daniel, who had set out their work in *La France, Pays de Mission?*,³¹⁰ supplemented by Georges Michonneau who did likewise in *Revolution in a City Parish*.³¹¹ He was also well versed in first translations of Dietrich Bonhoeffer’s *Cost of Discipleship* and Jacques Ellul’s *The Presence of the Kingdom*, the latter being referred to in depth within *The Face of My Parish*.³¹²

Allan later described reading Godin and Daniel’s book as ‘one of the turning points of my ministry’.³¹³ He wrote of reading *La France, Pays de Mission* for the first time in the late Forties:

It came as a profound personal challenge to me to read of the absolute devotion and painful self-sacrifice which priests like Godin and Daniel were making to bring the message of their Church to the unchurched masses of proletarian Paris. Many of the experiments in mission with which I have been associated since then

³⁰⁸ See Henri Perrin, *Priest-Workman in Germany*, (London: Sheed & Ward, 1947), and John Harvey, *Bridging the Gap: Has the Church Failed the Poor?*, (Edinburgh: Saint Andrew Press, 1987), 86-91.

³⁰⁹ Also embodied by the UK’s first consciously oriented ‘worker-priest’ – Ian Fraser in the Tullis Russell paper mill in Markinch, Fife from 1942 to 1944 – see Chapter 4. For a fuller discussion of the worker-priest movement in Europe, see e.g. Oscar L. Arnal, *Priests in Working Class Blue: The History of the Worker Priests (1943-1954)*, (Mahwah, N.J: Paulist Books, 1986) and, in the UK, John Mantle, *Britain’s First Worker Priests*, (London: SCM Press, 2000), 53 to 92 and John Harvey, *Bridging the Gap*, 86-91. It had spread to England in the immediate post-war period through individuals such as Michael Gedge and John Strong, miners and ministers, and the Sheffield Industrial Mission of Ted Wickham – see Mantle, 76-136.

³¹⁰ Henri G. Godin & Yvan Daniel, (1943), English edition published as Part II of *France Pagan? The Mission of Abbé Godin*, (London: Sheed & Ward, 1949).

³¹¹ Georges Michonneau, English edition published as *Revolution in a City Parish*, (London: Blackfriars, 1949).

³¹² Published in the UK in 1948 and 1951 respectively.

³¹³ AA6.5.11 (vi), ‘Europe – A Mission Field?’, for *The Christian*.

owe a great deal to the insights and passion of these French priests who agonised over the lost millions of France.³¹⁴

If we consider the terms of Godin's book, the like foundation of Allan's missiology is clear and, indeed, although some of its language and cultural presumptions are of its age, the book reads in many ways as a precursor to much that is commonly recognised in a present-day consideration of missiology, in that:

- It began with the startled realisation that 'France is a Missionary Country.'³¹⁵
- It focused on the building of Christian community: 'what must never be forgotten is that the missionary apostolate lies not in creating individual Christians...rather it consists in creating Christian communities: every human community should be a Christian community, existent or in the making.'³¹⁶
- It proceeded to recognise cross-cultural translation and the need for an indigenous Church: 'A missionary must never Frenchify a Chinaman, he must not Europeanise him as a step towards converting him. He must build a Chinese Church...'³¹⁷
- Godin recognised that the place for mission is in the everyday life of the ordinary person, as 'each individual belongs simultaneously to several milieux', as in 'work, neighbourhood and leisure activities'. He supported 'winning over the real milieux that are to be met with naturally', rather than 'a conquest by artificial means: taking Christians out of their natural environment to place them in another.'³¹⁸

³¹⁴ AA6.5.11.

³¹⁵ Godin and Daniel, 'France a Missionary Land?' in Ward, *France Pagan: The Mission of Abbé Godin*, 65.

³¹⁶ Ibid, 73.

³¹⁷ Ibid, 74.

³¹⁸ Ibid, 76-77.

- Godin likewise recognised there was ‘a Christian community radically divided from the pagan community on which it should normally be acting.’³¹⁹ His answer, like Allan, was a form of congregational group, by which we must ‘seek out in the community Christians with a missionary vocation.’³²⁰ This group would form ‘fully native missions’, and seek to divest the message of the Gospel from the trappings of the culture from which they have come: ‘our religion must be religion pure and simple, stripped bare of all the human adjuncts, rich though these may be, which involve a different civilisation.’³²¹
- For it had to be recognised that the institutional Church in present form was a hindrance: ‘Christ’s doctrine does not frighten the poor...what puts them off and discourages them is our mass of little rules of human prudence, our cases of conscience elaborated in other epochs, suited to another age.’³²² Thus, ‘the presentation of doctrine must be re-thought with the utmost care...’³²³
- Echoing the *rayonnement* considered further below, the goal was that there be established ‘a Christian nucleus’ in ‘all the existent human communities’, such that it ‘will itself become a light-bearing community.’³²⁴
- Godin sought ‘Christian action everywhere corresponding with life as it is being lived, moulded upon its shapes, built up with a missionary outlook, made to a missionary design.’³²⁵

³¹⁹ Ibid, 89.

³²⁰ Ibid, 92.

³²¹ Ibid, 128.

³²² Ibid, 132.

³²³ Ibid, 146.

³²⁴ Ibid, 178.

³²⁵ Ibid, 183.

- The task of the clergy was to help the laity to meet the twofold task of the layman ‘to bring his share of good into the society’ and ‘to contribute to the life of God in his brethren.’³²⁶
- Social and political work was essential as it is ‘temporal well-being which facilitates the spiritual development.’³²⁷
- As Allan lived out in his life, it was essential in order to seek to contextualise Christianity to the poor in word and by service that ‘all who undertake it must offer themselves in utter self-abandonment.’³²⁸

Secondly, Allan set out in his ‘Retreat’ speech how he was inspired by what he called ‘the greatest rediscovery in our Church’s life today – the apostolate of the laity’,³²⁹ which he recognised in lay ‘vocational groups’ that had sprung up since the war in different Christian denominations across Europe, dedicated to ‘co-ordinating and training the lay forces of the Church for a more active witness in the present world’.³³⁰ He related that ‘the truth is being rediscovered in every country in the world, by both the Roman Catholic and the Protestant Communion. The Protestant Professional Associations in France, the Evangelical Academies in Germany, the Tor Movement in Greece-all are concerned with the Apostolate of the Laity, and what it involves in practice’.

The foundation of the Ecumenical Institute at Bossey and the formation of the World Council of Churches at the Amsterdam conference of 1948, co-inciding with the formation of the United Nations and the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, was the beginning of a decade of dynamic pan-denominational international co-operation, in which Allan was to play his part.

³²⁶ Ibid, 187.

³²⁷ Ibid, 189.

³²⁸ Ibid, 133.

³²⁹ AA6.5.6, ‘Retreat’ speech.

³³⁰ Cahier de Bossey No.3, *Papers of the Ecumenical Institute No.3*, 1948, 3.

The effect of these influences was manifest in Allan's missiology. For the focus and goal of mission within the parish context, Allan drew on the Trinitarianism of Perrin, who had written: 'we had greater need than ever of the Christian Community. We knew ourselves that it was stronger than anything else, for it was modelled on the community of love in the Trinity.'³³¹

This quest for the formation of a true Christian community is much emphasised in *The Face of My Parish*, with Allan seeing the stress upon it given by Ellul as an 'indispensable factor' in 'bridging this wholly artificial gulf between personal faith and the demand for Christian social action'. Ellul reminded Allan that 'fundamentally a true lay apostolate presupposes the existence of a community in which and through the Holy Spirit may speak'.³³²

Allan therefore adopted the idea of the *rayonnement*, 'founding small Christian communities living in the milieu and radiating Christianity from their very midst'.³³³ The goal from his 'parochial evangelism' would be a 'missionary parish' which could live out the words of Michonneau:

If...we strip off the routine and turn boldly to new forms of the apostolate, the parish becomes a living cell, destined to propagate itself over an entire district.³³⁴

He continued to write throughout his life of the importance of these influences, particularly of Godin and Daniel. For example, in 1961, he wrote from Paris that they:

...broke loose from the traditional forms of their ministry by going into factories and worked, sharing the common life...Men like Godin challenged all the Churches around Europe to look seriously at the indifference and secularism around them, and inspired many pioneer experiments in evangelism all over the world.³³⁵

³³¹ AA6.5.6, 'Retreat' speech.

³³² *FOMP*, 62.

³³³ *FOMP*, 44.

³³⁴ Quoted in *FOMP*, 67.

³³⁵ AA6.11.5, *EC*, 26/08/61.

The foundation of Allan's missiology from *The Face of My Parish* was likewise based. The result was an exposition of the theology and practical missiological experience that Allan read, and the immediate contextualisation of that theology, much of it newly translated, by Allan as a hard-working, young minister to his working class parish in North Kelvinside.

3.1.5 Post-war Ecumenism & International Links

The 1950s was a remarkable and in some senses, a 'golden' period for the Churches in Scotland and initially at least, for ecumenism...The vision of the Baillie Commission had included a new drive to evangelise Scotland, which it had related to a grand ecumenical vision of the reconstruction of Scottish society in which a growing and uniting Church would exercise a decisive influence across all areas of life.³³⁶

Tom Allan was inspired by the concept of ecumenical unity in the exercise of mission and worked prominently on the world stage to seek a broad-based theology of evangelism.

Allan's ecumenism found different expressions. Allan hinted that an organic, Eucharistic unity was what he sought: 'I take it that unity means-whatever else-that we can sit down at the Lord's Table together.'³³⁷ He was sympathetic to the practices of other denominations. He visited Rome for a 'private audience' with Pope John XXIII,³³⁸ and denounced sectarianism in Glasgow: 'what is important is that the Churches can never fulfil their ministry to the world so long as they are divided by sectarian pride.'³³⁹ He wrote further: 'it will not serve the cause of Christ in our time either to deny our differences or to foment intolerance and bigotry-wrong and baleful things whoever holds them. There is

³³⁶ Douglas C. Gay, *A Practical Theology of Church and World: Ecclesiology and Social Vision in 20th Century Scotland*, (unpublished PhD thesis, University of Edinburgh, 2006), 142.

³³⁷ AA6.11.6, EC, 26/01/63.

³³⁸ AA6.4.4.

³³⁹ AA6.11.6, EC, 21/01/61.

a need for charity from us all, and a reaffirmation of our firm belief in freedom of conscience.’³⁴⁰

He was considerably moved by Orthodox worship when in Russia, expressing: ‘the amazing atmosphere of reality and power in worship, [which] was worship with a significance far beyond the conventional Church-going with which we are so familiar in the west.’³⁴¹

Ultimately, however, Allan’s ecumenism was focused in the same way as the rest of his theology: in the context of mission. In a speech to the London Missionary Society in 1956, he expressed it thus:

The scandal of our divisions is assuredly blocking the channel of divine blessing...it is a matter for thanksgiving that the Churches of the world, through the ecumenical movement, are being drawn together in the bonds of a common faith. Paradoxically, it is in the work of mission that essential unity is discovered. Unity of purpose is vastly more important than organic unity.³⁴²

The publication of the ‘Bishops Report’ in 1957, described by Ian Henderson in his trenchant criticism of the ecumenism of the period, as ‘a classic of diplomatic ineptitude’,³⁴³ created a furore with the result that ‘during the years 1957 to 1959, the Ecumenicals plunged Scotland into a controversy so acrimonious as to give satisfaction only to those opposed to Christianity.’³⁴⁴

In its very expression, Henderson believed that ‘for two years the Bishops’ report controversy dragged on, distracting the attention of the Church of Scotland from the vastly more important tasks of evangelising and adapting its approach to meet the situation created by the post-war industrial society.’³⁴⁵ This self-inflicted in-fighting came at an inopportune time for the Church, as it was otherwise seeking to empower some form of

³⁴⁰ AA6.5.10, *EC*, 09/06/62.

³⁴¹ AA6.5.2, ‘An Orthodox Bishop’.

³⁴² AA6.2.18.

³⁴³ Ian Henderson, *Power Without Glory: A Study in Ecumenical Politics*, (London: Hutchison & Co., 1967), 117.

³⁴⁴ *Ibid*, 119.

³⁴⁵ *Ibid*, 120.

outward mission in the fulfilment of ‘Tell Scotland’ and struggling to react appropriately to the first stirrings of secularisation.

In the wake of the storm and its effect on the potency of the Church in mission, the expression of Allan’s views became retrenched. It emphasised that for him that institutional, or indeed Eucharistic unity, was not fundamental, and so the focus should not be the union of denominations, but their collaboration in mission, thus emphasising his ‘centrist’ credentials.

He cautioned in 1959 that ‘unity is not something which we ourselves achieve. It is the gift of God’. Therefore, ‘in the coming together of the Churches our main preoccupation should not be with outward forms-theological patterns or ecclesiastical organisation, but with our obedience to Jesus Christ.’³⁴⁶

In 1960, looking forward to the next fifty years of the Christianity in Scotland, Allan identified, in my view presciently and correctly, the two major issues which would face the Church: ‘To my mind there are two special concerns which are going to occupy us during the next half-century...the first is unity, and the second is mission’. No matter the discussions with other Churches and the ‘Bishops Report’, he believed that ‘it is certain that the Kirk must continue to grapple with the whole perplexing question of the oneness of Christ’s Church.’

Allan was convinced that ‘in this humble search to end the divisions of Christendom, I believe the Church of Scotland has a unique part to play’. He had no doubt that ‘the greatest lesson we will learn in the next half century is that Mission and Unity go together, and that it is when the Churches are first of all concerned with true evangelism that the barriers which divide us will fall apart.’³⁴⁷

Thus, in the run up to the third WCC Assembly at New Delhi in 1961, to which he was invited but could not attend due to illness, Allan wrote ‘we have to be reminded constantly

³⁴⁶ AA6.2.18.

³⁴⁷ ‘The Church of Scotland Today’, AA6.5.8.

that the unity of the Churches is never merely an end in itself, but a step towards a more effective fulfillment of our mission in the world.³⁴⁸ His conclusion was that: 'I am for unity in diversity...I am against uniformity', which would be a 'stumbling block to be resisted.'³⁴⁹

He was, nevertheless, highly critical of evangelicals who refused to engage with the World Council of Churches, declaring somewhat optimistically at the dawn of the Sixties that: 'the ecumenical movement has not shown itself to be anti-conservative. The conservatives should exercise their responsibility in the context of the ecumenical movement.'³⁵⁰ It was, however, at that very stage, that the international ecumenical movement had its own concerns to the fore about the channelling of mission and evangelism through the Church, much to the growing chagrin of the conservatives.

Allan's ecumenism of the Fifties had been very much reflective of the international focus then. As regards the global background of ecumenical mission and evangelism at the time of the formation of the World Council of Churches in 1947/8, in the words of Dietrich Werner: 'if one meditates between evangelism and the ecumenical movement as a whole, one cannot deny the fact that ecumenism as such owes its very existence to the evangelical concern.'³⁵¹ The focus of the Western effort remained inter-denominational co-operation for evangelisation, as the message of Amsterdam in 1948 stated: 'the evident demand of God in this situation is that the whole Church should set itself the total task of winning the whole world for Christ.'³⁵²

Therefore, at the time of the formation of Allan's missiology, and its development during the Fifties, Allan's focus was in tune with that of global ecumenism from the formation

³⁴⁸ AA6.11.5, EC, 09/09/61.

³⁴⁹ AA6.11.5, EC, 30/09/61.

³⁵⁰ AA6.4.1.

³⁵¹ Dietrich Werner, 'Evangelism from a WCC Perspective', *International Review of Mission*, Vol 96, Nos 382/383, July/October 2007, 184.

³⁵² Ibid, 185.

of the WCC, which had ‘affirmed the tradition from which it comes, namely, the inseparable connection between Church unity and Church mission or evangelization.’³⁵³

In international terms, Allan became a significant figure in world ecumenical circles through his work with the World Council of Churches, and in the development of world ecumenical missiology, in particular emphasising the centrality of Church and laity. Allan played a key role in their Committee on Evangelism from 1953 until 1964, seeking to formulate common ground on the world stage on a theology of mission.

In many of the precepts of his missiology and ecclesiology, which he had collated, imbued and expressed contextually in Scotland without broad consultation, Allan pre-empted the concept of *missio Dei*. Whilst ahead of his time in expressing a practical outpouring of the *missio Dei*, his missiology chimed with the dominant ‘traditional’ strand of ecumenist mission, namely ‘Christocentric Universalism’, which was prevalent in global terms until its highpoint at the New Delhi Assembly of the WCC in 1961. Allan’s theological concentration on Christology, salvation and atonement would place his theology, missiology and brand of ecumenism in a line with a more prominent figure in the WCC of the era, Lesslie Newbigin.

Allan reported his initial connection to the North Kelvinside Kirk Session on 7th April 1953: he had been invited to attend the World Council of Churches in Geneva that August ‘to prepare a paper on Evangelism to be read at the Conference in Illinois, USA.’³⁵⁴

He duly attended the ‘Preparation Commission for Evanston’ in August 1953 in Geneva. The archives of the WCC reveal correspondence where the General Secretary, Visser t’Hooft, specially invited Allan by letter of 28 August 1953 to Evanston as a “consultant” to work on the main theme’. Allan noted the ‘great privilege’, but declined by letter of

³⁵³ Ibid, 186.

³⁵⁴ North Kelvinside Parish Church, Kirk Session Minutes.

14th January 1954 due to ‘the pressure of work this winter in my new post as Evangelist to the Home Board.’³⁵⁵

Allan was supportive of the second congress of the World Council of Churches in Evanston, Illinois, 1954, with its lay focus. Evanston had been heavily influenced by the Willingen conference of the International Missionary Council in 1952 (they were to merge with the WCC in 1961), and its conclusions were very much centred on the Church under a *missio Dei* concept, with passages which could have been written from Allan’s pen, such as: ‘Evangelization is no specialized, separate or interim enterprise of the Church. Instead, it is a fundamental dimension of all actions of the Church. All that the Church does has a fundamental evangelistic function. With all its dimensions the Church participates in the sending of Christ.’³⁵⁶

Allan was quick to draw a link, writing an article entitled ‘Evanston and Tell Scotland’ for *Life and Work* magazine,³⁵⁷ and highlighting that the Movement in Scotland was reflective of a global transformation of the Church and laity by the Spirit.

With his involvement in the World Council of Churches, Allan’s theological horizons and outlook were broadened, influencing further his open-mindedness in engagement with all missiological forms and views. He retained a close friendship with J.-P. Benoit, director of evangelism for the Reformed Church of France, and was praiseworthy of diverse figures that he had encountered in the world Church. His address book contained the names of figures such as the German missionary in India and academic missiologist, Arno Lehmann, and John Gatu, close colleague in the Fifties of the Very Reverend David Steel in Kenya, and later to play a key role at the initial conference of the Lausanne Movement in 1974.³⁵⁸

³⁵⁵ World Council of Churches Library & Archives, Geneva, Switzerland, Box 42.003, File 1, Correspondence (Allan, 1953-54).

³⁵⁶ *Evanston Report*, (London: SCM Press, 1954), Section II, para IIff.

³⁵⁷ Tom Allan, ‘Evanston and Tell Scotland: The Mission to Those Outside’, *Life and Work*, August 1954, 195-196.

³⁵⁸ Both at AA6.1.3.

Allan's work for the Department of Evangelism of the WCC continued throughout the decade, culminating particularly in a 'Consultation on a Theology of Evangelism' at Bossey in March 1958, and a further Consultation on the future of mission and evangelism at Bossey in July 1960.

The consultation of March 1958 marked a significant step forward in a global concept of mission and evangelism. It played a key part of the process which lead to, as Dietrich Werner, describes it, 'the first fundamental WCC study and theological statement on evangelism, 'A Theological Reflection on the Work of Evangelism', which was presented to the WCC Central Committee in 1959.' Once more, whilst bearing early elements of what Werner terms a para-Church 'messianic theology of evangelism' that would become common currency in the Sixties, the fundamental concepts in the 'Theological Reflection' to which Allan contributed, chime with Allan's missiology as expressed in *The Face of My Parish*, and would not have been out of place within it:

The document contains the affirmation of the Lordship of Christ over the world, the definition of an all-encompassing shalom as the final goal of mission/evangelisation, the affirmation of the evangelistic responsibilities of all members of the Church, and the need for constant Church reform in order for it to fulfil its missionary obligation.³⁵⁹

The further Consultation on the future of mission and evangelism at Bossey in July 1960 was between a diverse spread of those engaged in the theology and practice of mission. In attendance at Bossey in July 1960 was Tom Allan, along with such world mission luminaries as Billy Graham, George Webber (co-founder of the East Harlem Protestant Parish), Johannes Hoekendijk (chief missiologist of Sixties radicalism), D.T. Niles (long-time ecumenical leader), and Ted Wickham (founder of the Sheffield Industrial Mission). Allan wrote politely of the event in his weekly column that: 'Many of the other men there do not have much faith in Graham's kind of evangelism, and are working along quite different lines.'³⁶⁰

³⁵⁹ This quote and preceding: Werner, 'Evangelism from a WCC Perspective', 188.

³⁶⁰ AA6.5.2, EC, 23/07/60.

The conference of July 1960 marks a watershed period in world missiology, with many of the figures considered in this thesis present, representing the nuances of missiology with which they were associated, and also the tensions of the gradual departure from the focus of the Fifties on Church, laity and Christ's lordship. It was a moment where the 'Christocentric Universalism' to which Allan subscribed was just about to pass over supremacy after the WCC assembly of 1961 to the notion of the 'world setting the agenda' beyond the Church, characterising much of the direction of missiology in the Sixties. The spectrum of those present at the conference can be broadly summarised thus in terms of 'contextualisation':

- Right-wing: Billy Graham – salvation, then Church, 'accommodation' of culture only, little recognition of indigenous conditions.
- Centre –right: Tom Allan – mission through the Church laity, a contextualised message and Church towards a 'missionary parish', social action following conversion, but by now also influenced by the All-Scotland Crusade of 1955, leaning towards both Graham and Webber.
- Centre – left: Bill Webber – the contextualisation of Church and liturgy one step beyond Allan by the physical relocation of Church to the urban street in the East Harlem Protestant Parish, laity and clergy united together.
- Left wing: Johannes Hoekendijk – mission beyond the moribund institutional Church, in ignorance of it and the role of laity within it, humanisation of the Gospel to a secular world, social and political action, as in the later ethos of the Gorbals Group Ministry.

The Church in mission has been hidebound in mission over the last half century over the continuing battle between the polar opposites of the positions set out at each extreme above of Graham or Hoekendijk. It is perhaps time for an imaginative retrieval of the centre. A conclusion of this thesis will be that the 'centrists' of Allan and Webber may now hold the key.

The 1960 Consultation at Bossey was held in preparation for the Third Assembly of the World Council of Churches in New Delhi in 1961, which marked ‘the first and...only time in the history of the ecumenical movement attention was focused on the role and particular relevance of the local congregation for the evangelistic task of the Churches.’³⁶¹ It, in turn, led to the worldwide consultation from 1961 to 1967 on the ‘Missionary Structures of the Congregation’, which affirmed the *missio Dei* as the starting point, and urged that ‘the basic task of the ‘Church for others’ is to participate in the sending by God of shalom into society.’³⁶²

As Werner notes, ‘never since then has the shape of the local congregation been top of the WCC agenda again, despite the constant affirmation that the primary places for missionary and evangelistic witness are the different forms of local Christian communities.’³⁶³

At the highpoint for the focus on the local congregation of 1953-61 in global terms, Tom Allan was at the very centre, contributing significantly on that stage.

3.1.6 The International Prominence of the Laity

Allan’s focus on the laity was part of an international re-discovery which he influenced in his work with the World Council of Churches, and which had also inspired Allan in his early years and re-inforced his views as his ministry progressed.

If we were considering issues of mission and contextuality say fifty years ago in 1964, the present outlook in relation to the position of the laity in Church and mission, and the sense of optimism for the direction in the future, would have been radically different. The immediate postwar period was a crucible in which a radical re-alignment of laity to Church, clergy and world was begun internationally, if not finished.

As David Bosch describes the shift in the major institutions:

³⁶¹ Werner, ‘Evangelism from a WCC Perspective’, 188-189.

³⁶² Ibid, 189.

³⁶³ Ibid.

It dawned upon the Churches, both Catholic and Protestant, that the traditional monolithic models of Church office no longer matched realities. The theological *aggiornamento* in both main Western confessions discovered again that apostolicity was an attribute of the entire Church and that the ordained ministry could be understood only as existing within the community of faith.³⁶⁴

There were two avenues in which the role of the Church laity was considered in both Protestant and Roman Catholic traditions after World War II. The first was to emphasise the pivotal place of the laity in the engagement of the *missionary task of the Church* within the world under the *missio Dei*, a particular emphasis in the ecumenical climate in the immediate post-war period in early years of the World Council of Churches from its formation in 1948, reaching its highpoint in the period from the second World Assembly at Evanston in 1954 until the years immediately following the third World Assembly at New Delhi in 1961. It was an emphasis, as we have seen, upon which Tom Allan centred during that period, and which was later emphasised by the Roman Catholic Church following ‘Vatican II’.

The second avenue was intertwined, in considering the *relationship of laity to clergy* and to internal institutional structures of the Church, raising issues of power and authority, both in questions of scriptural interpretation and Church governance, thus envisaging the radical overhaul of the Church, again the second strand of Allan’s missiology.

Writing in 1961, Hendrik Kraemer, the first director of the Ecumenical Institute of the World Council of Churches at Bossey and author of the influential *A Theology of the Laity*, said:

Never in Church history, since its initial period, has the role and responsibility of the laity in the Church and world been a matter of so basic, systematic, comprehensive and intensive discussion in the total *oikoumene* as today.³⁶⁵

At ground level in the two decades post-dating World War II, the laity of the Western Churches were energised into co-operative dialogue, inter-communication and action as

³⁶⁴ David Bosch, *Transforming Mission: Paradigm Shifts in Theology of Mission*, (New York: Orbis, 1991), 471.

³⁶⁵ Hendrik Kraemer, *Wending*, (December 1961), 541, quoted in Hans-Ruedi Weber, ‘The Rediscovery of the Laity in the Ecumenical Movement’ in Stephen Neill & Hans-Ruedi Weber (eds), *The Layman in Christian History* (London: SCM Press, 1963), 377.

never before. This awakening realisation of the importance of the laity in the future of Christianity in the West was borne from the desperations of the Second World War, and the attitude that ordinary Church people must play a key role in the direction of the future. The focus was to combat the extremes of totalitarianism and war, but also in recognition that the answers to the integration of Christianity to society could not lie solely within the domain of the ordained clergy, but must take as its starting point the everyday existence of those who formed the body.

The confidence placed in this re-focus was absolute: that the emancipation of the laity would lead to purposeful and exciting directions in mission in the world; that it would re-cast ecclesial structures such that the face of the Church would now reflect more confidently those within and without; that a re-shaping of the liturgy would occur towards the everyday concerns of the street; that the denominational barriers would be broken down in common mission enterprise if not confessionally too; and that a unfettered flow of faith and action for justice and peace would result between Church and world through their virtual integration.

Writing in 1963 close to the decline of focus or interest on the role of the laity, Hans- Rudi Weber assigned the re-discovery to several factors, both theological, sociological and geo-political.³⁶⁶ The first was theological in the enlightening process of placing mission with the context of the *missio Dei* from Willingen onwards, as previously discussed. Beyond that, he summarised the remaining factors thus, as indelibly linked to the future of the Church and its position in post-war society:

The rediscovery also stems partly our new world situation: the breakdown of the *corpus Christianum*; the processes of industrialization and secularization which tend to edge the Church out of daily life into a religious ghetto; the fact that the Church is becoming almost everywhere a minority which has great difficulty in communicating with the modern world. Wherever these new insights about the nature and the task of the Church and these challenges of the modern world are

³⁶⁶ 'The Rediscovery of the Laity in the Ecumenical Movement', Chapter 16 of Stephen Neill & Hans-Rudi Weber, eds. *The Layman in Christian History* (London: SCM Press, 1963).

taken seriously—and the ecumenical movement attempts to do so—the question of the role of the laity immediately becomes prominent.³⁶⁷

This seems like a definition of the present day too, in times when the Church laity are no longer triumphed so resoundingly.

Immediately after the war, there arose lay centres across Europe which sought to meet that challenge, some as gathering places and training centres, others as occupational organisations. The booklet drawn up for the Department of the Laity of the WCC in 1957 entitled *Signs of Renewal: The Life of the Lay Institute in Europe*, sets out the remarkable extent to which such bodies had developed over the previous decade.³⁶⁸ When its companion volume, *Centres of Renewal*, was published in 1964, the number of lay training centres and evangelical academies for the laity in Europe had risen from fifty to eighty-five (including the recently formed Scottish Churches House, Dunblane and St Ninian's Training Centre, Crieff), and a prime focus of the book was upon the fifty to sixty that had arisen in Asia, Africa, North America and Latin America. Weber described the purpose and benefit of the centres as fivefold:

1. 'Where Church and world can meet, where Christians first of all listen to what God is teaching them in and through the predominantly secular events of their time... This leads to an honest dialogue between Christians and non-Christians as partners of equal right' to search for answers.
2. In this dialogue, 'the Gospel is spoken' in relation to human questions and society.
3. Lay people 'can help one another to discover what Christian obedience means... above all in the secular decisions of their daily work and leisure'.
4. Enabling group decisions for all those with a common interest, for example in the union movement or in a profession; and

³⁶⁷ Ibid, 378.

³⁶⁸ *Signs of Renewal: The Life of the Lay Institute in Europe*, (Geneva: World Council of Churches, 1957), 57.

5. Training for the lay person to combat 'biblical and theological illiteracy' and for the minister who might be 'alienated from the realities of this world'.³⁶⁹

The concern to reflect the resurgence in lay centrality was then reflected on the world stage, when the laity became one of the six key subjects at the second General Assembly of the World Council of Churches at Evanston, Illinois in 1954. The preparatory survey for Evanston, in which as we have seen Tom Allan played a part, set out the agenda for discussion of evangelism in these terms: 'laymen are the spearhead of the Church in the world: the true twentieth century evangelist is the instructed and witnessing layman.'³⁷⁰

Section VI of the Evanston Report made the importance explicit in relation to the 'battles of faith' in the ordinary places of the world: 'Very often it is said that the Church should 'go into these spheres'; but the fact is, that the Church *is* already in these spheres in the persons of its laity.'³⁷¹

Therefore, 'It is the laity who draw together work and worship; it is they who bridge the gulf between the Church and the world and it is they who manifest in word and action the Lordship of Christ... This, and not some new order or organization, is the ministry of the laity.'³⁷²

As we have seen in Scotland, the excitement surrounding Evanston around the Western Church was considerable, and its impetus in relation to the laity had a direct impact on the work of the Scottish Church in the years immediately following.

Furthermore, its development and enthusiasm amongst the young was intertwined in the United Kingdom with the heyday of the ecumenical Student Christian Movement. In this key period of its operation, the ideals of the SCM filtered back through its membership into Church structures, invigorating them for change and unification, and influenced Church leaders and politicians on the world stage in their attitudes towards the political

³⁶⁹ 'Introduction', in *Centres of Renewal: For Study and Lay Training*, (Geneva: WCC, 1964), 7.

³⁷⁰ *Evangelism-The Mission of the Church to those Outside her Life*, (London: SCM Press, 1954), 49.

³⁷¹ 'The Laity: The Christian in His Vocation', *Evanston Report*, (London: SCM Press, 1954), 160-170.

³⁷² *Ibid.*

landscape: 'For those who experienced it, the decade of the 1950s represents the golden age of the SCM...Those were heady days...' ³⁷³

So what was the 'theology of the laity' then expressed? Weber wrote in 1963 of the four central facets:

- (i) '...the nature and task of the laity is no more defined by comparing them with a special group within the Church-the ordained clergy, the theologian, the professional Church worker- but by a new appreciation of the Church in the world' – thus the Church as the whole people of God;
- (ii) That 'the laity shares in Christ's ministry to the world' not only in worship and Church activities, but 'when it is scattered abroad in every department of life';
- (iii) That each baptized person has received *charismata* from God, and thus 'the task of ordained ministers can no more be to enlist the laity for preconceived and set Church activities, but to help the charismatic laity to grow fully into its charismatic ministries' both in the Church, at home and at work; and
- (iv) 'to be a Christian in and for the world means self-offering...the aim of this mission is not to 'Churchify the world but to witness to Christ....True lay movements look beyond the world of the Churches and draw them into the movement of God's love for the world.'

He presciently finished his article by stating that the ecumenical movement 'loses its true self, however, as soon as it no longer shows these four marks of a genuine lay movement.' ³⁷⁴

On the level of missiological theory, principal marking points of international consideration of the work of the laity, prior to the rapid development of the 'humanisation' agenda outwith the Church in exercise of the *missio dei*, had been the work of the Roman

³⁷³ Robin Boyd, *The Witness of the Student Christian Movement: Church ahead of the Church*, (Geneva: WCC Publications, 2007), 60.

³⁷⁴ Hans- Ruedi Weber, 'The Rediscovery of the Laity in the Ecumenical Movement' in Neill, Stephen & Weber, Hans-Rudi Weber (eds), *The Layman in Christian History* (London: SCM Press, 1963), 377-394, 391.

Catholic theologian Yves Congar in his book published in English in 1957 as *Lay People in the Church: A Study for a Theology of the Laity*;³⁷⁵ and from a Protestant perspective, that of the first Director of the Ecumenical Institute at Bossey, Hendrik Kraemer, in *A Theology of the Laity*³⁷⁶ of 1958, taken from intended Gunning Lectures at New College, Edinburgh.

In the immediate wake of the Second Vatican Council and prior to the upheaval in Protestant mission theology caused at the fourth WCC Assembly in Uppsala in 1968, the high water mark of the ecumenical and interactive theological consideration of the laity was the 'Ecumenical Consultation' in September 1965 at Gazzada, Italy, jointly sponsored by the Permanent Committee for International Congresses of the Lay Apostolate of the Roman Catholic Church and the Department of the Laity of the World Council of Churches. Its co-chairman for the WCC was none other than one of our main Scottish protagonists, Ian Fraser, then of Scottish Churches House. The proceedings were later published as *Laity Formation*,³⁷⁷ containing a Joint Statement and Resolution.

Before the demise of the focus on the role of the laity in mission in Protestant circles from the later Sixties onwards, the Joint Statement serves as a concise exposition of the aims and elements of 'laity formation', equally apposite to the present. Having noted the context of secularisation, social upheaval, and the 'crisis of belief', the Statement sets out:

Laity Formation must equip a Christian to understand his faith and his worship as related to social, cultural and economic structures, and not just in terms of personal piety. Laity Formation aims not only at the training of the individual layman, but also at the development and radical renewal of the Christian community for its worship of God and its service to the world. The Christian must bring all his joys and sorrows, all his compromises and flatness and doubts into his liturgical life.³⁷⁸

In my opinion, in that resolution was contained the best hope, then and now, for the regeneration of the Western Churches through the laity across the denominations in

³⁷⁵ (London: Geoffrey Chapman, 1957).

³⁷⁶ (London: Lutterworth Press, 1958).

³⁷⁷ World Council of Churches, *Laity Formation: Proceedings of the Ecumenical Consultation, Gazzada (Italy), September 7th -10th, 1965*, (Rome: Arti Grafiche Scalia, 1966).

³⁷⁸ Ibid, 10.

inculturated, local mission. Within the volume considering the work of the Gazzada consultation, one can appreciate the depth of application towards a theology of the role and work of the Church laity that had been invested up to 1965, later to be cast to the wind. The spirit of that excitement is evident in Allan's work and those of his contemporaries, in Scotland and beyond.

And yet in ecumenical Protestant circles, speaking in 1993, the General Secretary of the World Council of Churches, Konrad Raiser, could then introduce his speech on 'Profile of the Laity in the Ecumenical Movement: Towards a New Definition' with the quizzical remarks:

The "laity" have almost disappeared from ecumenical discussion. This is all the more striking in that, only a generation ago, "laity" was an ecumenical keyword. Since then the passionate enthusiasm of the early ecumenical movement - which, at least in some very important respects, saw itself as a lay movement - has somewhat declined... What became of the "laity"? What caused the remarkable disappearance of this key ecumenical concept?³⁷⁹

³⁷⁹ Konrad Raiser, 'Profile of the Laity in the Ecumenical Movement', in Nicholas Apostola ed., *A Letter from Christ to the World : An Exploration of the Role of the Laity in the Church Today*, (Geneva: WCC, 1998), from an address given in Montreat, NC, USA in September 1993.

3.2 ANALYSIS – THE TENSIONS OF THE ‘MODERN’ AND ‘POSTMODERN’

Struggles with the Tensions: ‘New’ –v– ‘Old’

What were the key aspects of tension in Allan’s missiological model which provide the foundation for the recognition that Allan struggled to reconcile contrasts which still remain relevant to mission, and from which lessons can be learned?

3.2.1 ‘A Tale Of Two Paradigms’ – Allan And Bosch

Tom Allan viewed his work as part of a worldwide movement of God to empower the laity. He was positioned at the centre of a dynamic arc or bridge of missiological ideas and action that spanned from Europe to the USA, via Scotland. He drew from European missiology, and lectured and led rallies in North America. He wholeheartedly endorsed the nation’s most famous religious export, Billy Graham, from 1954 onwards. Allan’s name was known internationally through *The Face of My Parish* being a bestseller, the influence of the book on those who followed after him, and by his contributions to the World Council of Churches.

Allan was thus at the forefront of developments in world mission, both through *The Face of My Parish* and given his profile, but also when considering that missiology in global context. His missiology as expressed in *The Face of My Parish*, the founding documents of ‘Tell Scotland’, and his contributions to WCC theologies of mission and evangelism, was in keeping with the emerging realisation on the world stage that the Church’s mission existed not as a human function but as a product of the Triune God, and was subject to what would become known as the *missio Dei*: ‘God’s activity, which embraces both the Church and world.’³⁸⁰ As Will Storrar comments, ‘though he did not use the language of the *missio Dei*, Allan clearly understood mission theologically in these terms.’³⁸¹ For

³⁸⁰ Bosch, *Transforming Mission: Paradigm Shifts in Theology of Mission*, 391.

³⁸¹ Storrar, ‘A Tale of Two Paradigms’, 63.

example, in a Canadian speech in 1963, the connection is obvious: ‘we’re being called to participate... in Christ’s mission to the world because He is already at work in the world.’³⁸²

How do we place Allan within the world missiological landscape prevalent in the Fifties and *missio dei* theology?

The development of *missio Dei* theology militated against the sometime colonialist missionary imposition of cultural readings as normative of Christianity. In Allan’s context, he recognised this by seeking to distance mission from the cultural norms of the institutional Church, thus shielding the message from its then cultural expression, in anticipation of a new dynamic emerging from the interaction of the congregational group with the community.

Within the loose conglomeration of *missio Dei* theology, there is a firmer delineation of two central approaches to the *missio Dei* in Allan’s time with which we might isolate Allan’s strand a little further. In one corner stands a ‘redemptive historical-ecclesiological approach’, associated with the initiators in the Fifties of the *missio Dei* concept such as Barth, Hartenstein and Viceroy; and in the other an ‘historical-eschatological interpretation’ which came to prominence in the Sixties with such as Hoekendijk and Aring.³⁸³

Expressed otherwise, this is in one corner the ‘classical’ approach which sees mission as Christological: centred on the meaning of the Cross, of the need for atonement and redemption in God’s world, with a primary role for the Church in doing so and the ultimate goal of the evangelization of the world, under the banner ‘Jesus is Lord’; set in increasing opposition in the Sixties to a ‘conciliar’ approach which views the world and the political arena, not the Church, as the initiator and true field of mission, with the goal of Christian mission to be to implement the Kingdom of justice and peace, under a banner of ‘Shalom’,

³⁸² AA6, Recording of Speech at Canadian ‘Keswick’ Convention, June 1963.

³⁸³ See Thomas Kramm, quoted by Flett, *The Witness of God* at 54, fn 57.

accepting all secular means which may tend to do so, and rejecting all those institutional structures which do not.

Allan was resolutely ‘classical’ in his approach. We can express his missiology as representative of the predominant world missiological view in the Fifties of ‘Christocentric Universalism’. Allan exhibited the essential elements in his missiology as described by Konrad Raiser: ‘the Christocentric orientation, concentration on the Church, a universal perspective and history as the central category of thought.’³⁸⁴

The concentration emphasised ‘the universal significance of the Christ event, in which the idea of the ‘lordship of Christ over the world and the Church’ played a decisive role.’³⁸⁵ Transformational Christology and lay evangelism was thus central to the WCC missiology of the Fifties, which Allan played a role in forming. Newbigin’s declaration in 1953 that ‘an unchurchly mission is as much a monstrosity as an unmissionary Church,’³⁸⁶ thereafter began to lose credence.

Allan not only contributed to the prominence of such missiology within *The Face of My Parish* and his work at the World Council of Churches, but importantly worked it out in practice, applying the global theological concepts to which he was exposed in his reading and in his work for the World Council of Churches directly before him in his working class parishes in Glasgow and on the national stage.

However, delimiting Allan’s missiology simply to historical interest as a ‘classical’ expression of *missio dei* theology is insufficient, because Allan’s openness to engage with a broad range of influences means that his missiology also pre-empted traits that might recognised as central in the present ‘late modern’ era. In this way, by his missiology in some aspects being ahead of its time, it retains a freshness and importance for consideration now. Looked at broadly, indeed, the very attempt to embrace elements of

³⁸⁴ Konrad Raiser, *Ecumenism in Transition: A Paradigm Shift in the Ecumenical Movement?*, (Geneva: WCC Publications, 1991), 41.

³⁸⁵ *Ibid*, 91.

³⁸⁶ Lesslie Newbigin, *The Household of God*, (London: SCM Press Ltd, 1953), 148.

both the ‘old’ and the ‘new’ is reflective of our own times, secularisation and the progress towards a ‘postmodern’ society being incomplete.

David Bosch in his seminal work *Transforming Mission: Paradigm Shifts in Theology of Mission* of 1991 identified since World War II the beginnings of a ‘paradigm shift’ in mission, if such sociological tags are ever sufficient to adequately describe the ever-evolving present. Bosch focused upon a movement from K  ng’s ‘modern, Enlightenment paradigm’ towards the identification of ‘elements of an emerging ecumenical paradigm’, elsewhere described by Bosch as ‘postmodern’.³⁸⁷

With the benefit of hindsight, and with the above reservation in the use of ‘paradigms’ as coherent descriptive terms, where in such a shift would Allan’s missiology lie?

In Allan’s time as now, in Bosch’s words, ‘the new paradigm is...still emerging and it is, as yet, not clear which shape it will eventually adopt. For the most part we are, at the moment, thinking and working in terms of two paradigms.’³⁸⁸ Allan’s missiology engaged with tensions which persist in present ‘late modernity’ in that overlap, and succeeded in placing within a cohesive whole both definitive ‘modern’ and ‘emerging’ elements, in Bosch’s terminology. Therein partly lies the appeal of his work for the present, where that friction persists. For, as Bosch comments, ‘a time of paradigm shift is a time of deep uncertainty.’³⁸⁹

Even if the use of the concept of ‘paradigm shifts’ were set aside, there is little doubt that Allan was working on the cusp of an extraordinary social transformation of Western society in the Sixties, with inevitable effect on Church and mission, whose ramifications continue. At that point, Allan was engaging in multi-faceted methods; some very much of the past, but also in others which might survive the overlap.

³⁸⁷ The latter being ‘an awkward term’ which he later replaces with ‘ecumenical’ – at 531, fn1.

³⁸⁸ Bosch, *Transforming Mission*, 349.

³⁸⁹ Ibid.

The traditional notion of Protestant mission in the early Fifties under the ‘modern paradigm’ concentrated on Christianity as the supreme meta-narrative, and the linking of all human history and experience directly to an authoritative and unassailable infinite, to be located in the authority of scripture. It was a top-down revelation, centred on the ultimate Enlightenment symbols: the writing, distribution and exhortation of words.³⁹⁰ It thus attempted to challenge secular modernity’s separation of facts and values by proclaiming the ultimate ‘facts’ of Christ.³⁹¹ This strand is identifiable in much of Allan’s concept of parish and national mission. Therefore, on the one hand, in his focus on the Church, the primacy of biblical education and training in theological literacy, the role of Billy Graham, the All-Scotland Crusade and Allan’s ‘conversion’ post-1954 to the place of preaching and mass evangelism in his missiology, Allan’s practice would undoubtedly, as Storrar notes, ‘conform to the pattern of Bosch’s modern paradigm of mission.’³⁹²

These traits in Allan’s missiology are reflective of Storrar’s analysis that during the immediate post-war period:

On the one side we find the recurring tendency among Scottish Christians to define mission in the solitary terms of one dimension or approach to outreach: with an emphasis on evangelistic events, or expository preaching, or charismatic experience or social engagement, as competing alternatives which must be embraced to the exclusion of the others.³⁹³

However, of significant importance for the landscape of mission in Scotland, then and now, is the realisation that such one-dimensional ‘modern’ expressions are ‘certainly not the whole picture with Tom Allan himself.’³⁹⁴ As we have seen, Allan was marked by his willingness to engage with any and all forms of theological expression, in a resolute attempt to bring the Gospel by whatever means.

³⁹⁰ Ibid, 358.

³⁹¹ Ibid, 58.

³⁹² Storrar, ‘A Tale of Two Paradigms’, 62.

³⁹³ Ibid, 64.

³⁹⁴ Ibid.

Therefore, in Storrar's words, 'we may describe Allan's ministry in both North Kelvinside and the All Scotland Crusade as 'a tale of two paradigms'.³⁹⁵ He identifies the overlap in post-war Scotland and in Allan's life and work:

The picture of mission that we find in the ten years from the end of the Second World is an ambiguous one, in the terms of Bosch's missiological analysis. On the one hand, we can find so many of the traits of modern mission in the impressive initiatives in evangelism which are such a marked feature of Scottish Church life from 1946-55. On the other hand, there are clear features of what Bosch would wish to call postmodern mission theology and practice present in that same postwar movement. No one typifies this creative tension between overlapping mission paradigms better than Tom Allan...³⁹⁶

Therefore, running in conjunction with the ingrained streak of the 'modern' oral exhortation of the Word, is Allan's 'brilliant anticipation of key elements of later, postmodern missiology', within *The Face of My Parish* and in his practice throughout his life, in its starkest form in parish ministry. For Storrar, these features are 'central to the postmodern understanding and practice of mission, discerned by Allan and his post-war French mentors forty years before the publication of Bosch's seminal study of the trend.'³⁹⁷ They are as follows:

- 'central to his mission was the local congregation';
- 'the role of the ordained ministry was to equip and enable the members to engage in that missionary encounter...especially in the small group';
- The adoption of a 'trinitarian and yet also socially contextualized approach' from being 'deeply read in...European theology and studies of ministry and mission'; and
- The recognition of 'the resistance of some of his own Church members...to the restructuring of internal Church life...required by Christ's call to be a missionary congregation'

³⁹⁵ Ibid.

³⁹⁶ Ibid, 60-61.

³⁹⁷ This quote and those below at 63-64.

In Allan's implementation of those principles, Storrar finds clear parallels to the present context, in its focus on the laity, the concentration on the formation of community as true *koinonia*, and the importance of the local and the everyday (my emphasis):

...we can also discern a recurring and growing appreciation of Allan's insight that mission is to be affirmed as God's many-sided but inclusive mission in the wider world, into which the local congregation and its ordinary members are called to participate in fellowship, witness and service... [Mission in late modernity] *departs from the rational and apologetic in favour of the experimental, experiential, and the formation of community without pre-determined authoritative structures. This focus on the contextual and the communal as, in Newbigin's phrase, the 'key hermeneutic of the Gospel' is essential both to Bosch's understanding of the emerging paradigm and Allan's concept of mission sixty years ago.*

Not only do we thus identify Allan's model as a precursor of much that has concerned missiology in the Northern hemisphere in the last half-century, as it has strived to cope with the transition at the end of a Christendom model which Bosch would label 'a paradigm shift', we can also see in Allan a bold attempt in practice to 'ride two horses' in an effort to relate to Scotland in both 'rational and apologetic' (modern) and 'contextual and communal' (postmodern) terms, an outpouring of his 'both/and' missiology.

This mixture remains too within society – Allan's 'both/and' missiology remains relevant. We live in days that still bear similarities to the transitional processes with which Allan engaged. Allan's ideas and experience, living as he did at the inception of the same social challenges that we continue to face, invite parallels to be drawn to the present.

The writer concurs with Storrar in identifying the novelty and prescience of the 'package' of missional elements. The constituent parts may have been partially derivative or adapted from elsewhere, but the originality is in their commixture, and their contextual collation and application.³⁹⁸ It is not fanciful to name Allan as one of Bosch's 'group of pioneers'

³⁹⁸ Frank Bardgett, however, believes that 'Storrar over-emphasises Allan's originality as a missionary thinker' *Scotland's Evangelist*, Chapter 11, fn 9, a view with which it is perhaps evident that I would respectfully disagree.

who were at the cusp of the translation towards the postmodern, embracing the potential of elasticity and experiment dependent on the context.

At its heart, as Storrar affirms, was an embrace from Allan's theological sources of the transcendence of God, but in conjunction with His imminent presence in the glory and tragedy of the passing days, within the very ordinariness and mundanity of life in all its facets, such that the Church could not claim to speak as an exalted guardian of an immutable truth without context, but had to recognise that its very existence in theology and community owed a principal debt to the people around and within it:

The North Kelvinside parish visitors that Allan trained went on to discover for themselves what Bonhoeffer and Ellul and Michonneau affirmed, that God was already at work in the lives of local people.³⁹⁹

With that background, there were three principal tensions in Allan's work between the 'rational and apologetic' and the 'contextual and communal', or indeed between the 'two paradigms', all connected and derived from the centrality of Church and laity in mission. Their friction was to influence the practical outcome of Allan's missiology, and inform our own appreciation of a relevant 'theology of the laity' for the present.

3.2.2 Tension 1: Revolutionising the Church –v- Opposition to Change

Frank Bardgett asks in relation to the dissipation and demise of 'Tell Scotland':

What was the chief obstacle in developing missionary congregations? Was it the persistence of a traditional evangelicalism in speaking a worn-out language or the persistence of a traditional ecclesiology of the one-man band? Was it the essential theological ignorance of so many Church members? Faced with many layered institutional inertia, forced by events to handle both gains and losses from its association with the All-Scotland Crusade, Tell Scotland's ideals achieved less currency than its name.⁴⁰⁰

³⁹⁹ Storrar, *A Tale of Two Paradigms*, 63.

⁴⁰⁰ Frank Bardgett, 'The Tell Scotland Movement: Failure and Success', *Records of the Scottish Church History Society*, Vol 38, 2008, 105-154, 149.

The building blocks of Allan's missiology were as follows, structured sequentially: the *Church* at the centre of the *parish*; whose *lay people* would form a *congregational group* to be the vanguard of mission; to be carried out initially by *visitation evangelism*; which would make 'contact' and 'communication' of an outline the Gospel; thereafter seeking 'consolidation' by *bringing those outside the gates into the body of the Church* who would then engage outwith; thus initiating a transfusional flow which would *transform the Church* and create a *missionary parish* of continuous mission and service.

When one breaks down the essential constituent elements italicised above, it becomes clear just how many irreplaceable pre-conditions the model set, potential stumbling blocks likely to grind the model to a halt if any one of them was ineffective and thus failed to create the ground for the next step towards the ultimate end. It was necessarily progressive and not complementary.

In particular, under Allan's model the institutional Church was set a high goal of purging and regeneration as a predication of success, and also was focal as the venue for the exercise of many of the constituent parts. This defining emphasis on the parochial community as agent and object of mission, to be reformed and purified, remained a central tenet of Allan's missiology from 1946 onwards; in direct conflict with the 'many layered institutional inertia' which it encountered.

The lifelong goal for Allan in evangelism was thus captured in his definition of the term (my emphasis):

Evangelism is that activity, of whatever kind, which brings persons into a saving knowledge of God in Christ, and *leads them into the Church, which is the sphere of Christ's continuing work in a fallen world.*⁴⁰¹

The Church was therefore for Allan 'a fellowship of chosen people...not a human institution, but a divine creation.'⁴⁰² The Church as divinely appointed sole agent and

⁴⁰¹ AA6.7.6, Broadcast on the Scottish Home Service, 21/06/56.

⁴⁰² AA6.2.13, 'Nature and Function of the Church', Ashlin White Bible Lectures, Mooresville, North Carolina.

object of God's mission to the world and conduit of God's eschatological promise was developed in a 1956 broadcast (my emphasis):

How does the Christ prepare the world for his coming again?... [He is] preparing the world for his Second Coming *through the Church*...The Church is part of the divine strategy. It is called into existence by the Word of God...[The Church] *is both the visible manifestation and the divinely appointed agent of the kingdom of God.*⁴⁰³

Along with his later reliance on mass evangelism, the concentration on the Church in this regard was the other element of Allan's missiology which Bosch would determine as resolutely 'modern'. However, there were two aspects of Allan's view of the Church that can be marked out as 'new', 'innovative' or, in Bosch's terms, 'emerging' or 'postmodern'.

Firstly, he recognised that the very *raison d'être* of the Church is mission, without which it is a shadow of its purported self. Allan's approach to the 'Nature and Function of the Church' is clear from a 1953 lecture of that name⁴⁰⁴: 'the Church is a fellowship of missionary people', which means that 'a Church which is not a missionary Church is, in no sense of the word, a Church at all'.

Secondly, Allan had identified from the beginning that 'today in Scotland the Church has become largely irrelevant to the life and needs of the vast majority of the people.'⁴⁰⁵ In order to address 'the problem of communicating our gospel to the masses outside the Church', this would entail an 'imperative need to re-examine the pattern of our Church's life'. Allan's theology meant that the two requirements would be held 'inextricably bound together, inter-related and inseparable.'⁴⁰⁶

⁴⁰³ AA6.7.4 (3), 'Why Did Jesus Come?', 8-11, Broadcast, 16/12/56.

⁴⁰⁴ AA6.2.13 - Ashlin White Bible Lectures, Mooresville, North Carolina, 1953.

⁴⁰⁵ Ibid, '5. The Witness of the Layman', 5.

⁴⁰⁶ Both at *FOMP*, 49.

Allan was inevitably undertaking a battle with the forces of reaction within the existing institution. He recognised early on in *The Face of My Parish* that ‘the most crushing and bewildering opposition to the work of mission in Scotland today does not come from the pagan masses outside the Church, but from those people inside it, for whom the Church is not the instrument of God’s redemptive purpose, but an exclusive spiritual club for the selected few.’⁴⁰⁷

Allan nevertheless predicated the success of his mission plan on the Church being sufficiently purged so as to be redirected towards a vibrant parochial community, dependent on the existing Church being capable of three central processes: (a) of producing the lay individuals who might begin the mission in the parish; (b) of receiving and nourishing those who became part of the community as a result; and (c) of consequently being willingly changed and adapted in its life and liturgy. He knew that the strength in numbers and influence of those reactionary forces had the potential to scupper his whole missiological focus by inhibiting any or all of those three essential requirements. He wrote of the potentially destructive effect of institutional conservatism in a further scathing passage within *The Face of My Parish*, referring to:

...those for whom religion is a matter of comfortable and respectable conformity...an attitude of mind which is implacably opposed to any change in the routine of conventional religion, and which sets itself against any effort to confront a congregation with its missionary responsibility.⁴⁰⁸

Recounting his experiences in North Kelvinside, Allan asserted in a 1953 lecture that:

There are vast sections of the membership of the Church who are blind to their responsibilities as Christians and actively opposed to any movement to reclaim the masses for Christ and his Kingdom.⁴⁰⁹

What impact did such influences have in Scotland to Allan’s model of mission at a national level in ‘Tell Scotland’? At the conclusion of the All-Scotland Crusade, Billy Graham warned that the mantle was passed over to the Churches to consolidate the gains made

⁴⁰⁷ AA6.2.13 - Ashlin White Bible Lectures 1953, ‘5. The Witness of the Layman’, 5.

⁴⁰⁸ *FOMP*, 31-32.

⁴⁰⁹ AA6.2.13 – Ashlin White Bible Lectures 1953, ‘5. The Witness of the Layman’, 7.

through the laity, emphasising that any failure to do so was the Churches' responsibility.⁴¹⁰ However, in the coming months, the reality was that often the laity were unable or unwilling to respond: 'on the one hand, the ministry persisted in performing as disparate one-man bands; on the other too, many of the laity were spiritually illiterate. Missionary stasis resulted.'⁴¹¹

Furthermore, if a minister or congregation balked at the depth of commitment and engagement required by the 'Tell Scotland' principles, the Crusade gave them the perfect exit strategy. It created the impression that Tell Scotland, or indeed Christian mission as a whole, was defined by Crusade evangelism, and thus allowed them 'to breathe sighs of relief and say: 'Leave it all to Graham.'"⁴¹²

There appeared further to have been a widespread inability to provide an appropriate fellowship to newcomers. As early as April 1956, an article in *Life and Work* entitled 'What Has Happened to the Enquirers?' commented:

Some Churches report that only a minority of those who were welcomed into the congregations at the end of the Crusade are still with them...were the Churches not ready to receive them?⁴¹³

Allan's solution to counter the forces of internal reaction of apathy and opposition was, in itself, prone to difficulty. Allan was effectively promoting ecclesiastical upheaval by ignoring the existence of 'the rump' altogether, for an initial mission outwith the normal ordinances of religion. How was this deliberate separation of the engaged laity from the worshipping faithful to be balanced and reconciled within a later unified Church community?

The concept of the 'congregational group' amalgamated all those who had been inspired by the implementation or by the fruits of parish mission into a tight nucleus of faith, living out Allan's realisation that the only way to prepare a Church for mission was to do mission

⁴¹⁰ Burnham, *Billy Graham: A Mission Accomplished*, 74.

⁴¹¹ Bardgett, 'D. P. Thomson and the Orkney Expedition -a Tell Scotland Case Study', 21.

⁴¹² Falconer, *Kilt*, 82.

⁴¹³ As quoted in Falconer, *Kilt*, 92.

itself. The group at North Kelvinside, and at St George's Tron, had weekly meetings focusing on bible study, prayer and discussion on service, and was broken down further into prototype 'house groups', much in the contemporary style modeled by Ernest Southcott and championed by, amongst others, Ralph Morton. It would thereafter act as the vanguard of visitations campaigns, street missions and social service.

However, in concerns that may be reflective of the eventual failure of the idea in practice, Allan was 'not at all certain' as to 'how far this approach is likely to succeed against the conventional background of Church life' for four reasons:

- (a) 'the group can so easily become separatist, exclusive and pharisaical'
- (b) 'the mixed character of its membership' as it 'inevitably attracts the crank'
- (c) 'the danger of subjectivism and introspection' on spiritual matters; and
- (d) 'tremendous differences...in spiritual capacity and awareness'⁴¹⁴

The creation of the 'congregational group' brought with it serious risks to the fulfilment of an overall 'apostolate of the laity', by its very nature dividing the congregation, and creating a sect that might confront any newcomer. It ran the danger of the elevation of a separate class of 'super-Christian', somehow anointed at a higher level.

These were risks which Allan had, indeed, previously commented upon in *The Face of My Parish*. He there identified 'as the most serious problem', that the formation of the group would 'drive the members of it into an inevitable 'holier-than-thou' attitude'. Not only that, it also 'introduces an element of conflict and unease in the minds of those outside the group', by which 'it may vitiate the group's work in its first evangelistic responsibility – within its own congregation.'⁴¹⁵

⁴¹⁴ *FOMP*, 80-81.

⁴¹⁵ All at *FOMP*, 80.

To this list, Allan could have added with the benefit of his experience in ‘Tell Scotland’ that the main detriment for the groups to be formed and maintained was that they required a significant degree of commitment to mission, and a zeal borne of a depth of faith, in order to persist in their task. It was patient, long-term local commitment that was required, and not a ‘quick-fix’ burst of excitement which Graham’s Crusade could so easily encourage. Such dedicated zeal was abundant in his own life, but often insufficient within individual Christians and in congregations throughout Scotland. As Highet concluded from his research in 1960 in the wake of Billy Graham and in the end days of ‘Tell Scotland’, the hope for a rolling programme of mission and service in the parish was often reduced to a one-off event-based engagement, perhaps influenced by Graham’s style, noting that:

Fewer congregations are currently engaged on [mission] than one would have expected from the enthusiasm engendered a few years ago, and that a good many who expressed their resolve not to do just a once-for-all mission but to follow it up have allowed a longer period to elapse than was their original intention.⁴¹⁶

The bottom line is that the gargantuan efforts of Allan, Thomson and Graham failed to shift to sufficient extent the almost immovable mass that formed the bulk of the Church membership in the Fifties, as Highet concluded in referring directly to the passages above from *The Face of My Parish*:

In the thirteen years since [North Kelvinside], this opposition has been overcome to greater or lesser degree in different areas and in different congregations, but it is difficult not to feel that the laity in general has not responded to the call to evangelism to the extent hoped for in the late 1940’s and early 1950’s.⁴¹⁷

In the late Fifties and early Sixties, Allan came to appreciate, from personal experience in the Church and the work of John Highet, that when the moment had presented itself nationally, his goal had not been accomplished. How then did he assess the relative failure

⁴¹⁶ Highet, *the Scottish Churches*, 85.

⁴¹⁷ *Ibid*, 77.

of his efforts to permeate society with Christianity and evangelise Scotland? Looking back to the Forties and Fifties, he wrote:

It was a time of unparalleled outreach to those masses of people outwith the membership of the Churches. And yet in spite of this extraordinary missionary endeavour I think it's true to say that, by and large, the non-Churchgoing masses remained curiously unimpressed.⁴¹⁸

Allan blamed not the method from North Kelvinside, or the incongruity of mass evangelism, but the complacency of the Churches in their response. Writing in 1960 of Highet's *The Scottish Churches*, Allan described the book as 'ruthlessly realistic in assessing the results of our missions'. However, Allan could not accept that the responses of ministers within the book indicated that the missiology was misguided, but instead that the Church's resistance had stymied the fruition of the missiology:

I utterly deny and refute from my own personal experience the findings of so many of my colleagues about these campaigns. D.P. Thomson came to my first parish in 1947 with a campaign of visitation evangelism, and completely transformed my own work as a minister and the whole life of the congregation.

Is it not, rather, a reason for examining ourselves? Is it not a possibility that the failure of evangelism is directly related to some equal failure in the Church? That there is something about us that fails to hold those who have been contacted and won?

Highet's 'brilliant book' therefore, should be a 'text-book for study in our congregations...for its shattering attack on our complacency.'⁴¹⁹

Bardgett would agree with Allan: 'at its outset, the leaders of Tell Scotland intended to challenge complacency and clericalism in the Kirk: a failure to rise to that challenge...goes some way to explaining the fading of the Movement'.⁴²⁰ Ultimately, the writer is drawn further to agree with Bardgett, in turn, that 'the failure of the 1950's was the widespread

⁴¹⁸ AA6.5.11, 'Attitude to the Gospel', for series 'Talking Point' for *The Christian*, 4.

⁴¹⁹ 'My Week-The Scottish Churches', 1960, AA6.5.8.

⁴²⁰ Bardgett, 'D. P. Thomson and the Orkney Expedition -a Tell Scotland Case Study', 21.

inability to understand how profound was the challenge to the call of mission to the existing culture, power-structures and institutions of the kirks.’⁴²¹

Despite his incisive diagnosis in his early years of ministry of the absolute failure of the parish system to deliver effective mission, Allan undertook to resuscitate the aged relation back to rude health, and predicated his entire missiology upon it. In doing so, the sharp conflict created in the implementation of the theoretical elements of his missiology, much of which can be defined as ‘emerging’ or ‘post-modern’ within Bosch’s classifications, both underlined and yet undermined the bravery of the missiology itself.

It was the clash, on the one hand, of Allan’s upbringing, his Presbyterian ecclesiology and evangelical theology with, on the other, his startling recognition of a new social order and requirement for ‘new evangelism’, and his discovery of a radical, ecumenical, ecclesologically-neutral missiology from Europe. Allan attempted to fit one into the other, with potentially explosive but ultimately inconclusive results. The fuller contextualisation of his European influences was thus, arguably, incomplete.

Allan’s high ecclesiology, very much reflective of pre-war Scotland but also of his times, was soon to be strongly challenged in the Sixties in the bypassing of the Church under a conciliar ecumenist outlook on mission. Was Allan’s ecclesiology the real encumbrance to the implementation of his radical pre-1954 missiology? What if Allan had proceeded with his pre-1954 model, but not insisted that the purpose of mission was to bring the whole parish into the ecclesiastical fold, and had thus avoided the stumbling block of the assimilation of new converts to Church culture? Would this in turn have created a new and dynamic Church in parallel, or even assimilated back to the existing Church – a ‘Fresh Expression’ even?

Martin Johnstone’s angle on the centrality of the Church in the mission of Allan and his predecessors is as follows:

⁴²¹ Bardgett, ‘The Tell Scotland Movement: Failure and Success’, 150.

Although important and genuine attempts to engage with those living in poverty in Glasgow, the strategies of Chalmers, MacLeod and Allan were all based upon the presupposition that the institutional Church is the redeemed community and that once those in poverty realise this, they will wish to become part of it... There is, as such, little or no recognition of the insight that the poor, within the biblical narrative, are themselves at the heart of the redeemed community...

Their strategies were also based on an implicit acceptance of what Margull identified as a form of 'structural fundamentalism' prevalent within the Church..., which understands the prevailing models of organisation, at both national but even more critically at local levels, as foundational and predetermined.⁴²²

John Harvey similarly argues that the weakness was that:

[Allan] remained convinced that these souls would eventually come into the Church...as a result of the faithful and corporate activity of the renewed Christian congregation.⁴²³

What if, Harvey asks of the Church, it is the 'very manner, style and internal context of its being there'⁴²⁴ that was preventative to the success of Allan's model? Harvey thus proposes that mission should begin not within the Church, but 'out there in the world.'⁴²⁵

In *The Face of My Parish*, Allan recognised the drastic state of the institutional Church around Europe in the immediate post-war period: 'the Church has long since ceased to be anything but a pale reflection of the true Christian community...I believe that on the Church's attitude to this problem depends, not only to its future effectiveness, but its future existence as an institution.'⁴²⁶

He further acknowledged the 'distrust of the traditional parish system' within emerging post-war European lay groupings based 'not on the place of residence, but on a common ground of interest'.

Allan, therefore, was aware, and addressed as early as 1953, the argument that was to gain particular currency a decade later in world missiology: that the institution should be

⁴²² Martin H. Johnstone, *Towards a Practical Ecclesiology for Urban Scotland*, (unpublished PhD thesis, University of Glasgow, 2005), 214-215.

⁴²³ Harvey, *Bridging the Gap*, 72.

⁴²⁴ Ibid.

⁴²⁵ Ibid, 73.

⁴²⁶ *FOMP*, 42-43.

temporarily abandoned as a starting point of mission and that ‘Church’ could as validly be formed in the world.

The lay movements across Europe in Allan’s time, recognitions that God was already at work and alive in mission beyond and without the Church, were practical reflections of the emergence of *missio dei* theology in the mid-Fifties, and indeed of the incarnational ministries of the Sixties and the ‘emerging Church’ movement of the present. They were of considerable importance to Allan and a key influence upon him. The important distinction, however, is to recognise that they did not inspire Allan as a destructive force ecclesiologically, in other words to abandon the traditional Church, but rather as an illumination of the Church’s failings which consequently brought a determination to purge and cleanse its very soul.

Therefore, whilst Abbé Godin’s thinking was central to Tom Allan’s *missiology*, it lost in a contest over against his *ecclesiology*. Allan was presciently aware of the issue that the rejection of the Church by Godin and alternative lay communities raised, but whilst drawing inspiration from their recognition of the need within the Church laity and in society for a supra-Church community, he ultimately rejected the idea that their departure from the structure was the solution, or indeed that they could even inherently be called Christian organisations.

Allan raised the question in *The Face of My Parish*, ‘can they provide any real alternative to the traditional pattern of the Church’s life out of the ineffectiveness of which they were born?’ He answered it thus:

These functional groups cells cannot by their very nature be called ‘Christian communities’ in the deepest sense. Since they are formed on the basis of a common cultural or professional interest, it follows that they must of necessity be exclusive fellowships... It seems to me that there is in all this a dangerous tendency to idealize the secular community—the workers’ world, for example—and almost to regard it being in itself ‘Christian’, simply because there is evidence of some kind of sense of community to be found there...to go the length of saying that God has fact ceased to speak through his Church, and that his Word is being heard to-day in the so-called pagan world. Such an attitude proceeds out of a double

misunderstanding. It betrays a curious blindness to the true meaning of the Christian community; and it also betrays a profound misunderstanding of the nature and function of the Church itself... There are those who believe the answer has to be found within the Church itself, and who realize all that this involves in conflict and heartbreak for those who seek such an answer.⁴²⁷

This conclusion also later tempered Allan's attitude to experiments in incarnational ministry and mission in Scotland. He wrote positively of the efforts of Scottish worker priests⁴²⁸ and industrial chaplains to relate the Gospel to the work environment of ordinary people, as:

...a serious attempt to be identified with their people in the most real possible way, and so to demonstrate the relevance of Christianity on the spot. It may not be the whole answer, but it is an honest effort to bridge what can be a wide and terrible gulf.⁴²⁹

Allan was receptive to the Gorbals Group Ministry nearby in the city of Glasgow, and to their inspiration from the East Harlem Protestant Parish:

All honour to the men in East Harlem for the work they are doing and the way they are doing it. There are people right here in Glasgow engaged in the same kind of challenging work, and many others dealing with the same kind of situation.⁴³⁰

Ultimately, however, it was 'one view' as part of the overall picture, and a valid one at that, but not his own. If there was a purpose of such a theology of 'identification' within Allan's missiology, it did not mean validity *per se*, but for Allan was a return to what he had always advocated – it may be advantageous for gaining a true understanding of the ordinary working person in the parish in order to contextualise mission, which ultimately would end in the Church.

Such groups or cells could not, therefore, replace the role of the traditional Church structure in mission. For Allan, they did not highlight its fundamental inadequacy, as Harvey might suggest, but their existence served merely to spotlight the flaws. The 'structural fundamentalism' of Margull was seen by Allan as a likely strength and not a

⁴²⁷ *FOMP*, 45.

⁴²⁸ Such as Ian Fraser and Walter Fyfe.

⁴²⁹ AA6.5.10, *EC*, 'Automation and the Dignity of Work'.

⁴³⁰ AA6.11.6, *EC*, 22/06/63.

weakness or encumbrance. Allan saw little alternative but to embrace the ‘conflict and heartbreak’ of which he wrote.

However, the Scottish Church in 1945 to 1960 was not purged. The essential pre-condition remained unfulfilled. The consequent effect of the ‘Church-centrism’, that Allan shared with nearly all contemporaries as being foundational to a mission plan, was in practice to stifle the flow of adequate communication through the Church laity with ordinary people in the parish which he sought, and to diminish the contact which had been obtained from visitation evangelism in its infancy. It was the ‘structural fundamentalism’ which partly defeated an otherwise dynamic missiology and, with the advance of secularism in the Sixties, tainted Christianity and the very notion of a ‘parish mission’ with the purview of a conservative institutional Church, viewed with increasing scepticism if not disdain by the younger generation. That Christianity *was* the Kirk in its then form became an impediment to mission rather than a beneficial status. There thus emerged a direct conflict of youth with a pre-war organisation which Allan’s generation had inherited and failed to fully turn around.

Had Allan persisted at a national level with his pre-1955 lay missiology, it may not have initiated a rapid groundswell nationwide of Christian adherence, but it may at the least have set the Church on a course towards a fuller contextualisation of the Gospel; a closer interaction with culture; a movement towards the breaking down of the clergy/laity divide; and placed the Church as institution at a more integrated level within society. In doing so, this may have more readily permitted the assimilation of those who wished to become part of the Church from mission, and geared the Church more strongly to ride the wave of growing secularisation from the late Fifties onwards, ameliorating the rapidity of decline.

If mission is now to be re-formed as centred upon the laity, the public perception of the Church, and of Christianity itself, remains a significant obstacle. Whilst Christian laity may once more become the vanguard of mission, it cannot again be under a determined pretext that the institutional Church is the ultimate destination of their mission, or that their task *per se* is Church regeneration. The Church laity in mission must be unfettered

in their paths and goals, allowing new forms of *koinonia* to arise as a result of their encounters where appropriate.

3.2.3 Tension 2 : The ‘Apostolate of the Laity’ –v- Secularisation

Evaluation of Billy Graham’s ministry in Scotland still arouses controversy...It will remain a matter of debate as to how far the Crusade contributed to, or was simply a casualty of, the tide of social change which was by the mid-1950’s adversely affecting all the Churches.⁴³¹

‘Tell Scotland’ and Billy Graham had the historical misfortune to be pitching their message to a population whose social demographic was in the early stages of a dramatic flux. Viewed back through the lens of the Sixties, the seismic effect of social secularisation on Protestant Church adherence in Scotland leads the historian Tom Gallagher to conclude that ‘Tell Scotland’ and the Billy Graham Crusade did no more than ‘conveyed the impression of surface vigour and continuing popular appeal for Protestantism,’⁴³² whereas reality was about to bite.

From a century-high peak in membership of the Church of Scotland of around 1.32 million in 1956, in the words of the political commentator Iain Macwhirter, ‘suddenly, it collapsed in one of the most dramatic secularisations experienced by any country in the world.’⁴³³ By 1963, the level of Church connection was the lowest in the century, suggesting a drastic collapse in the space of seven years: ‘however, things then got worse, notably after the watershed in the religiosity of Scots in the years 1963-5.’⁴³⁴ Those years witnessed a collapse in the numbers of new communicants, baptisms and Sunday School attendance.⁴³⁵

⁴³¹ Peter Bisset, ‘William Franklin Graham’, entry in N.M.deS. Cameron et al ed., *Dictionary of Scottish Church History & Theology*, (Edinburgh: T. & T. Clark, 1993), 376.

⁴³² Tom Gallagher, ‘Protestantism and Politics’, Chapter 6 within Graham Walker and Tom Gallagher (eds), *Sermons and Battle Hymns: Protestant Popular Culture in Modern Scotland* (Edinburgh University Press, 1990), 100.

⁴³³ Macwhirter, *The Road to Referendum*, 147.

⁴³⁴ C.G. Brown, *Religion and Society in Scotland since 1707*, (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 1997), 159.

⁴³⁵ *Ibid*, 160.

For Peter Bisset, ‘the year 1958 was a watershed,’⁴³⁶ given that the membership of the Church of Scotland ‘peaked in 1956, faltered, and by 1958 had plunged into a gradient of decline which has continued with little remission ever since’. The identification by Bisset of the year 1958 as a missiological and cultural crux is supported by the social historians Hugh Macleod and Arthur Marwick. MacLeod adopts Marwick’s concept of the ‘long 1960’s’ from 1958 to 1974 as ‘marking a rupture as profound as that brought about by the Reformation.’⁴³⁷ Referring to this quote, according to Macwhirter the fall in Scotland was of greater depth and intensity, given its prior global position as a bastion of Presbyterianism:

Since Scotland was one of the countries that led the Reformation in the 16th Century, this rupture was all the more dramatic here. Scotland has had a history of militant Christianity from the Covenanters to the Disruption, and an education system largely shaped by the Kirk. It is hard to believe that all this could disappear, in historical terms, overnight. And yet it did.⁴³⁸

Crucial to the secularisation of Christianity within this period are the years of 1958 to 1962, during which Allan was still very much at the forefront of Scottish public life, and was recognising the gathering storm and reacting demonstratively against it. Those years are described by Hugh MacLeod as ‘a period of cautious questioning, of still tentative beginnings, in which some of the movements and trends that were to be characteristic of the years following began to be heard and seen.’⁴³⁹

The gradual winding-down of the public prominence of Allan’s missional model in those ‘bridge years’ thus reflects not its essential utility but primarily the mood of its object, being ordinary people in wider society, summarised thus by Hugh MacLeod:

The post-war Church boom had come to an end...The power and prestige which the Churches had often enjoyed in the years after the war and the associated

⁴³⁶ Bisset, ‘Training for Evangelism: National Resources for Local Mission’, 115, and graph on membership, 1948-84, on the same page.

⁴³⁷ Hugh MacLeod, *The Religious Crisis of the 1960’s*, (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2007)1, from Arthur Marwick, *The Sixties: Cultural Revolution in Britain, France, Italy and the United States*, (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1998), 7.

⁴³⁸ Macwhirter, *The Road to Referendum*, 147.

⁴³⁹ MacLeod, *The Religious Crisis of the 1960’s*, 60.

atmosphere of moral conservatism were increasingly resented and were coming under attack-often in indirect ways.⁴⁴⁰

In Scotland in this period, as the historian Callum Brown has written:

In the late 50s and especially the 1960s, social forces were unleashed (especially amongst the young) which were to propel the Scottish Protestant Churches into one of the most severe slides of Church adherence yet experienced in the western world.⁴⁴¹

MacWhirter identifies three particular social forces which served to undermine the Kirk in these years:

- A change in the cultural dynamic - ‘the rise of youth culture, consumerism, the contraceptive pill and the spread of television’
- A change in the social dynamic - ‘Urban renewal and the growth of new towns...broke up the family networks and the connections between communities and local ministries’; and
- A change in the political dynamic – ‘religious dogmatism was challenged by the spread of progressive ideas after the war...people had seen what government could achieve, and social progress undermined the community of faith.’⁴⁴²

Allan recognised in 1962 that the moment may have now passed as the nation’s youth began to confront the institution with their apathy or even antagonism:

I think that in the years following the war the Church...had the ball at its feet. Evangelism was easier then than it is today. More doors were open. There was a readiness to listen, to debate, to discuss- I’m thinking particularly of young people- which I don’t believe is present to the same extent today.

I don’t doubt that the Church itself is partly to blame for this. We failed to grasp our opportunities. It may have been a failure in understanding of the young people

⁴⁴⁰ Ibid, 82.

⁴⁴¹ Callum G. Brown, ‘Each Take Off Their Several Way?’ Protestant Churches and Working Classes in Scotland’, Chapter 5 within Walker and Gallagher (eds), *Sermons and Battle Hymns: Protestant Popular Culture in Modern Scotland*, 81.

⁴⁴² Macwhirter, *The Road to Referendum*, 147 -148.

themselves, or a failure in courage to proclaim the total demands of the Christian faith to a generation which was prepared for commitment.⁴⁴³

With Christianity rapidly becoming sidelined from the mainstream in the late Fifties and early Sixties, that Allan's lay missiology which relied upon the Church got lost in a national scale was partly a sign of the times, another casualty of the old order. Allan and the Church as it then stood were in some ways powerless to counteract the alienation. The 'complacency' of the Church to which Allan referred to in 1960 was, in part, inevitable; being borne of the movement of society away from the institution, partly caused by the Church's internal obduracy but also by social forces beyond its control.

Was this 'evolution' or 'revolution'? At one end, there is the sociologically-based theory generally accepted until recently that 'the losses suffered in the 1960's were simply the logical conclusion of a long period of decline.'⁴⁴⁴ On the other hand, however, Callum Brown argues that the evangelical discourse, of which Allan and Graham were an obvious continuance, was subject to a sudden discontinuation due to the very nature of its appeal in the post-war years. There is a connection between the strength of the Church in the mid-Fifties and the identity of the groups who departed in the decline which is difficult to overlook. Young people formed a large proportion of the missionaries for 'Tell Scotland' and D.P. Thomson's missions. The figures presented by Allan for the demographic of enquirers at the Crusade in 1955 indicate a predominance of young people.⁴⁴⁵ These factors were in keeping with the times, as Callum Brown indicates:

The evidence suggests that the strong interest in organised religion [during 1946-56] was amongst young people, perhaps especially those born just before and during the war years. It was this generation that experienced the last major exposure to the 'home mission'.⁴⁴⁶

It was the departure of youth from the Church which heralded the decline. The generation born in the period from 1930 to 1945 was the last which maintained, as a matter of generality, a close connection to organised religion. Once they had emerged from their

⁴⁴³ AA6.11.5, EC, 'The Young Ones, The Kirk Must Face the Challenge', 26/05/62.

⁴⁴⁴ MacLeod, *The Religious Crisis of the 1960's*, 9.

⁴⁴⁵ Tom Allan, ed. *Crusade in Scotland...Billy Graham* (London: Pickering & Inglis Ltd, 1955), 108.

⁴⁴⁶ C.G. Brown, *Religion and Society in Scotland since 1707*, 162-3.

formative experiences in the mid-Fifties, they become integrated into the institutional Church. Their successors in the late Fifties and early Sixties did not automatically follow. Those born post-war, 'the Baby Boomers', were swept along in the social revolution of 1960's Britain, with its significant 'role of prosperity-induced cultural change in reducing the social significance of religion in people's lives.'⁴⁴⁷

For Marwick too, 'the principal catalyst of change in the later 1950's and early 1960's was the emergence of a rebellious youth culture.'⁴⁴⁸ Allan presciently identified in 1962 that 'our young people's rejection of the image of the Church is part of a much more significant social and cultural change'. Noting 'new prophets' such as John Osborne, Jack Kerouac and Arnold Wesker, he correctly detected 'an attitude of revolt and despair, of rejection and bitterness.'⁴⁴⁹

Allan's conclusion was that the Church would not win the youth back by 'brighter services or jazzing up its liturgy. The issue is an ideological one.'⁴⁵⁰ Whilst socially and politically he remained firmly left-wing, on personal morality his writing became increasingly reactionary and conservative. Inspired anew by meeting John Stott, the leading evangelical of the younger generation,⁴⁵¹ Allan wrote that:

The deepest social problem in Scotland today is the 'couldn't care less' attitude of so many people who seem to spend all their energies in the immediate gratification of their material desires... Scotland needs a new moral dynamic, a new set of values, a new will to achievement, a new sense of direction...[to be found]...only from God himself...For me there is no answer to our problems apart from a revival of true religion.⁴⁵²

Likewise in the Fifties, 'the theatricality of the revivalist preacher' appealed to young women⁴⁵³ in an era which still placed strong religious connotations upon femininity, piety and the traditional social roles of women. Women became the backbone of Church life in

⁴⁴⁷ C.G. Brown, *Religion and Society in Scotland since 1707*, 166.

⁴⁴⁸ See MacLeod, *The Religious Crisis of the 1960's*, 14.

⁴⁴⁹ AA6.11.5, EC, 'The Young Ones, The Kirk Must Face the Challenge', 26/05/62.

⁴⁵⁰ Ibid.

⁴⁵¹ AA6.11.1, EC, 24/11/59.

⁴⁵² AA6.5.9, TV Broadcast, 'It's My Belief', c.1960.

⁴⁵³ C.G. Brown, *Religion and Society in Scotland since 1707*, 198.

subordinate, gender-specific positions. A key cultural change was the corrosion of those assumptions, as Callum Brown has notably concluded being:

...the product of a 'de-pietisation of femininity', combined with a 'de-feminisation of piety'. From the 1960s...being religious could no longer be founded on 'old' female virtues, and being feminine could no longer be founded on religious ones.⁴⁵⁴

The alienation of youth, particularly female, due to the change in cultural, social and political dynamics outlined above, caused the movement away from the Church as institution, and because Allan's lay missiology was indelibly linked to the Church, it too was a target. The Sixties would thus indeed see the beginning of the transformation of the Kirk, but not in the manner Allan envisaged. Instead of a shelter for regeneration for all, especially the lost and downtrodden, as Allan had desired, the Kirk became increasingly dependent upon affluent suburbia, thus re-enforcing a public image of standing and respectability. In the Sixties and Seventies, as Harvie comments:

Among professions with a strong sense of local position – such as law or banking – Church membership remained strong, but its grip on the lower middle and working classes, which had survived the 1950s largely due to Church extension programmes, could not cope with the social changes and population movement of the 1960s.⁴⁵⁵

The political outlook of the core of the Church re-inforced the public perception of an increasing divergence. Its often conservative stance reflected not only its primarily upper-middle class composition, but also a history of working and 'artisan' class Protestantism and Unionism of a previous generation, often linked to opposition to Irish Catholic immigration, Freemasonry and the Orange Order. A survey of Commissioners to the General Assembly of the Church of Scotland in 1964 found that 74% voted Conservative, 13% Liberal and 13% Labour.⁴⁵⁶ As the country, and its youth in particular, swung politically to the left, upon the 'secularisation of society' was super-imposed upon a 'secularisation of social prophecy' which had been growing from the foundation of the

⁴⁵⁴ C.G. Brown, *Religion and Society in Scotland since 1707*, 204.

⁴⁵⁵ Harvie, *No Gods and Precious Few Heroes: Scotland 1914-1980*, 155.

⁴⁵⁶ D.R. Robertson, *The Relationship between Church and Social Class in Scotland*, (unpublished PhD thesis, University of Edinburgh, 1966), quoted in Callum G. Brown, "Each Take Off Their Several Way?", 82.

Labour movement in the 1890s, thus in political terms ‘sweeping aside the relevance of Church connection.’⁴⁵⁷ The need to identify with Protestantism for employment and social advancement began to diminish. The Church of Scotland’s apparent links to a particular class, political affiliation, the professions and the establishment did not serve it well in the face of decline. Moreover, having failed to act on the outward-focused mission initiatives of the Fifties, ‘a routine focused inwardly on the ordinances of religion, on recruitment by nurture, proved incapable of resisting secular trends.’⁴⁵⁸

In short, in complete anathema to Allan’s driving ethos, in the words of Callum Brown, the Protestant Churches ‘became estranged from the fulcrum of community identity.’⁴⁵⁹

In the midst of such turmoil, or some would say as partly the cause of it, in the Sixties a younger generation of clergy sought to change the direction of the institution towards a dedication to the poor and an engagement with the developing culture, influenced by liberation theology and international ecumenism, the theology of Dietrich Bonhoeffer,⁴⁶⁰ the ‘demythologising’ project of Rudolf Bultmann,⁴⁶¹ and the ‘Honest to God’ debate initiated by Bishop John Robinson.⁴⁶² Many encountered such radicalism under the teaching of Ronald Gregor Smith and Ian Henderson⁴⁶³ at Trinity College, Glasgow. The historian Christopher Harvie writes of the Sixties in the Church of Scotland:

The Church remained a paradox. Middle-class in recruitment and leadership, and on the whole evangelical in theology, it nevertheless adopted, largely at the behest of the clergy, a range of liberal policies on race, the arts, sexual morality, and home rule. Until the 1960s it was, effectively, the last redoubt of old-fashioned Scottish liberalism. But its appeal to the progressive young was dangerously limited, and in due course a generation of intellectuals who could sympathise with the Church’s

⁴⁵⁷ Callum G. Brown, “Each Take Off Their Several Way?”, 81.

⁴⁵⁸ Bardgett, *Scotland’s Evangelist*, 337.

⁴⁵⁹ Callum G. Brown, “Each Take Off Their Several Way?”, 81.

⁴⁶⁰ In particular, the influence of Dietrich Bonhoeffer, *The Cost of Discipleship*, (London: SCM Press, 1948) and *Letters and Papers from Prison*, (London: Fontana, 1959).

⁴⁶¹ E.g. *Jesus Christ and Mythology*, (New York, Charles Scribner’s Sons, 1958).

⁴⁶² John A.T. Robinson, *Honest to God*, (London: SCM Press Ltd, 1963).

⁴⁶³ E.g. Ronald Gregor Smith, *The New Man: Christianity and Man’s Coming of Age*, (London: SCM Press Ltd, 1956) and Ian Henderson, *Myth in the New Testament*, (London: SCM Press Ltd, 1952).

radicals, such as [George] MacLeod or Kenneth McKenzie, personally and on political issues, simply faded away from formal belief.⁴⁶⁴

For a period at least, liberal, progressive Christianity could retain a public, intellectual voice in the social sciences, and as an alternative youth sub-culture in the ‘hippie’ era. The attempt by some within the ministerial ranks of the Church of Scotland to meet the challenges of the Sixties emphasised foreboding division internally, however, on an evangelical/ecumenical axis, centred on the Iona Community and the Crieff Fraternal, creating precisely the kind of factionalism which Allan was at pains to avoid throughout his life and ministry. It further produced a gulf with many of the older generations within the Kirk who were at the heart of the resistance to change which Allan had experienced in the previous decade. Their grounds of opposition now were to a radicalism which was in many ways more extreme than the emancipated social theology of Allan. In comparison, Allan’s missiological drive in the Fifties to purge and re-invent the Church as a socially-compassionate agent and object of mission must have by then seemed mild and benign to the Church’s bedrock parishioners.

Some would argue that the departure from a core evangelical message hastened the decline, or even was contributory to its creation. Many of the leading figures in traditional Scottish Church life of the Fifties, who had been supportive of Allan and Graham, viewed any attempt to engage or align with the cultural shifts as doomed and destructive.

Whichever direction Allan may have taken had he lived longer, with his missiological insight and concentration on the integration of Gospel and culture, Allan would have been amongst the first to recognise the present dilemma of contextualisation that, in Will Storrar’s words, ‘the Churches must acknowledge that cultural change from modern to postmodern Scotland and re-think not only their patterns of Church life and mission but their understanding and practice of the Gospel itself.’⁴⁶⁵

⁴⁶⁴ Harvie, *No Gods and Precious Few Heroes: Scotland 1914-1980*, 83-84. Kenneth McKenzie (1920-71) was a progressive Church of Scotland minister in central Africa, serving in present day Malawi and Zambia as they moved towards independence, and on his return to Scotland was a founder of the anti-apartheid movement.

⁴⁶⁵ Storrar, ‘A Tale of Two Paradigms’, 69.

Whilst the radically altered social context will mean that those ‘re-thought patterns’ cannot simply mimic the past, and that some of Allan’s methods such as ‘visitation evangelism’, public preaching or mass evangelism are likely obsolete, the essence of Allan’s work which pre-figured and in part directed mission in ‘late modern’ times, needs to be retrieved and re-focused as a guide to the present and future, such as the primacy of the lives and witness of ordinary people.

In conclusion, as the late Fifties and early Sixties unfolded, the Church became increasingly incapable of establishing the ‘missionary parish’ because of the growing progress of secularisation, and its direct impact upon youth and women in the Church, the mainstays of the model. Allan’s model centred upon the Church. Secularisation militates now against the Church as the *object* of mission, albeit it does not, in the writer’s view, of itself cast doubt on the focus of Allan on the Church laity as the *agent* of mission.

Looking back, if there was ever a ‘window’ in which a model relying on the laity of a re-invigorated institutional Church as both agent and object of mission could have borne lasting fruit on a national scale in Scotland, it was in the decade from 1946 onwards. Church affiliation was high, a dedicated band of young people had enthusiastically engaged with the institution, the Church retained a strong body of gifted and inspirational leaders, and the forces of secularisation had not yet imposed a strident narrative in the alternative. It was within sight of making a lasting impact, certainly prior to 1955. The period, however, transpired to be ‘the last hurrah’ of large-scale home mission.

As can be seen in the ‘Tell Scotland’ reports at Wiston Lodge in 1958, if the Church could not be turned around, the ministry themselves with their dominant position within the Kirk must shoulder some of the blame, for as the journalist Harry Reid comments:

...the 1950s in particular were a fat and good period for the Kirk, but the alarming decline that has set in since then may well be rooted in a lack of far-sightedness at that time and in a failure to respond adequately and imaginatively to the fresh challenges that were beginning to emerge...If there was indeed a failure to build on a position of new strength, then some of the great figures of the 1950s and

1960s must be seen, in retrospect, to have been less impressive than they seemed at the time...Maybe...the ministers of fifty years ago did not do a sufficiently rigorous and forward-looking job at a time when the current was, for the most part, with them.⁴⁶⁶

The bottom line is that the missionary focus on the laity of 1945-60 was lost or abandoned, along with much of the Church's social standing. With the enthusiasm for mission and ecumenism waning amongst Church leaders and ministers, by reflection an ignored laity lost interest. It is difficult not to agree with Frank Bardgett when he concludes that 'the 'new evangelism' of the post-war era had run into the sands' and with his comments of the Church at a general level that 'a historic opportunity to prepare the Kirk for the post-modern era had been lost'. Thus, in the absence of any vision taking hold to transform the Church, 'conventional, minister-centred life and reticent laity proved enduringly resistant to all challenges to change.'⁴⁶⁷

3.2.3 Tension 3: Local Witness –v- Mass Evangelism

Did mass evangelism also contribute to a failure in the 'apostolate of the laity'?

Whether inaction or secularisation was to blame, it was that seeming inability of the Church to form and retain vibrant 'congregational groups' in 'Tell Scotland' which led Allan to introduce the third 'modern/postmodern' tension within the model: the apparent paradox of trying to create local witness by mass evangelism.

Allan had been firmly against mass evangelism as a tool of mission. Not only had he lived that out in practice in North Kelvinside, he had concentrated on local, lay initiative in *The Face of My Parish* and also within the founding principles of 'Tell Scotland', as the means of 'contact, communication and consolidation' amongst the people of the parish, through the building of relationships and the formation of community: a slow-burning growth at ground level.

⁴⁶⁶ Harry Reid, *Outside Verdict: An Old Kirk in a New Scotland*, (Edinburgh: Saint Andrew Press, 2002), 55.

⁴⁶⁷ Bardgett, *Scotland's Evangelist*, 336.

In his early years in ministry, he had thus expressed his opposition to ‘that pietistic evangelicalism, which has its roots in the revival movements of the last century, and which expresses itself in a concern for what it calls a ‘personal salvation’, to the exclusion of any interest in, let alone concern for, the world in which the soul lives.’⁴⁶⁸

Allan had further warned in *The Face of My Parish*:

I am convinced that [evangelicalism’s] inevitable ‘personalism’ has to be guarded against. Too often the concern for individual salvation meant a retreat from the actual world in which men earn their bread.⁴⁶⁹

Not only had he lived out that opposition in practice in North Kelvinside and committed himself instead to the world before him, he had concentrated on local action and the formation of community in *The Face of My Parish*. That ethos then informed the founding principles of ‘Tell Scotland’.

Allan had first encountered Billy Graham by attending a ‘Youth for Christ rally’ in a Glasgow Church in 1947, where he later recalled: ‘being impressed by the strangely compelling sincerity of the preacher, but thinking also that - whatever the approach to evangelism might be - this was not it’, decrying the flashiness of the ‘exaggerated draped suits of striking shades, exotically brilliant ties...gold trombones.’⁴⁷⁰

As if to turn full circle, only a few months after *The Face of My Parish* was published in early 1954, the ‘old evangelism’ was back. Allan wrote in June 1955 following the Crusade that mass evangelism had been ‘unjustifiably neglected’.⁴⁷¹ Even the later *de facto* leader of the conservative evangelical wing of the Church of Scotland, William Still, had come to believe that mass evangelism was ‘obsolete...evangelistic entertainment.’⁴⁷² So why the *volte face*?

⁴⁶⁸ AA6.5.6, Speech to ‘Retreat’, c.1950/1.

⁴⁶⁹ *FOMP*, 62.

⁴⁷⁰ AA6.5.6, *Rally*, September 1956, 4.

⁴⁷¹ Allan, ed., *Crusade in Scotland...Billy Graham* (London: Pickering & Inglis Ltd, 1955), 122.

⁴⁷² William Still, *Dying to Live*, (Fearn, Ross-shire: Christian Focus Publications, 1991), 117-118.

As indicated in Chapter 2, Allan's forthright validation of Graham was based on the hope of unblocking the inertia. As he explained in late 1954, 'Dr Graham has reminded us of the place of evangelistic preaching in the recruitment of the laity.'⁴⁷³ Allan envisaged Graham as the spark for the creation of 'congregational groups', just as he recalled them emanating from his own preaching in the parish.

In inviting Graham, it is clear that Allan's primary expectation was not of a revival outside of the Church. Allan was pinning his hopes on the success of Graham in fulfilling the Phase II recruitment of the laity. Since national mission under Phase III was dependant on Phase II, Allan was predicating the creation of the 'missionary parish' on Billy Graham's ability to deliver the masses to 'Tell Scotland'.⁴⁷⁴

The casualty was his prior missiology. Whilst maintaining his insistence on an overall holistic approach to mission, Allan was now ready to endorse the widespread public proclamation of what he readily recognised was only 'half a message'. In the defensive pamphlet on Graham that he wrote for 'Tell Scotland' in 1954, Allan explained that:

The evangelist is called by God to lead men into the community of the redeemed... And it is for this limited task that Dr Graham knows himself to be called. [There is a] false dilemma between the so-called 'individual salvation' and the so-called 'social gospelism'. *It is not either/or. It is both/and.* Dr Graham as an evangelist is concerned with the first.⁴⁷⁵

Allan wholeheartedly lived out a 'both/and' missiology in *his* life and work. However, the danger from inviting Graham's acknowledged concentration only on 'individual salvation' without 'social gospelism' was to pre-suppose that the two can be separated chronologically, which was the main basis of MacLeod's opposition. In that cleft, Allan remained 'keenly aware of the limitations of Billy Graham's kind of evangelism.'⁴⁷⁶ He was nonetheless willing to utilise it to seek the formation of a 'new' or 'postmodern'

⁴⁷³ Tom Allan, *The Agent of Mission: The Lay Group in Evangelism, Its Significance and Task*, (Glasgow: Tell Scotland Pamphlet, 1954), 22-23.

⁴⁷⁴ 'The more I reflect on this intensely practical question of the recruitment of the laity, the more I regard it as the crux of the 'Tell Scotland' movement. And it is certain that the second phase (Sept 54 to Summer 55) will wholly determine whether or not the third phase is to take place.' Ibid, 22.

⁴⁷⁵ AA6.5.6, *The Tell Scotland Movement and Billy Graham*, 2 (my emphasis).

⁴⁷⁶ AA6.11.2, *EC*, 24/09/60.

gathering of ‘congregational groups’, not now from the local, organic growth as he envisaged in *The Face of My Parish*, but from one of the most starkly ‘old’ or ‘modern’ methods imaginable.

Allan never wavered in his view that the Crusade was a success, and its method justified. He repeatedly utilised his weekly newspaper column to defend Graham against persistent opposition.⁴⁷⁷ Allan and Graham remained close personal friends. Allan was part of Graham’s team for his New York Crusade of 1957, addressing a thousand ministers in New York on ‘parochial evangelism’.⁴⁷⁸ Graham further invited Allan to be ‘associate evangelist’ in his Australasian Crusade of 1959.⁴⁷⁹ Allan was the key player in the return of Graham to Scotland for a one-off rally at Ibrox Park on 24 June 1961, and supported the proposal for his London Crusade of 1965.

Allan faced significant personal criticism over his support for Crusade-style mass evangelism and for Billy Graham himself. The renowned ‘Iona’ minister in the new housing area of Pollok in Glasgow, James Currie, was a vocal critic in the public forum. In response to Allan’s sponsorship of Graham’s return to Glasgow in 1961, Currie wrote to the *Evening Citizen* newspaper, seeking to remind Allan of his pre-1954 position:

Mr Allan knows well enough that effective evangelism lies not in the mass meeting but in the local situation, where a congregation is eager to witness and to serve in its own parish...to the conscientious parish minister, the Kelvin Hall was and remains a horrible nightmare. I can only hope and pray that never again will the true work of the Church be distorted by the mass hysteria and ballyhoo of those days.⁴⁸⁰

Allan firmly believed, however, that Graham was part of the same evangelistic movement of the Spirit since the war as Godin, Michonneau or Bonhoeffer. Allan’s speech at the welcome service for Graham at Glasgow Cathedral in 1955 reflected that belief:

Today in every country in the world, the Church in all its branches is fired with a new sense of its missionary responsibility, and is humbly seeking to discharge its

⁴⁷⁷ Ten articles supporting Graham from 04/10/58 to 16/11/63, at AA6.11.1 to AA6.11.7.

⁴⁷⁸ AA6.5.6, *Rally*, August 1957.

⁴⁷⁹ AA6.11.1, *EC*, 04/10/58.

⁴⁸⁰ AA6.11.1, Letter to *EC*, 11/10/58.

commission to make disciples of all nations. The Crusade which begins tomorrow is part of a world-wide movement of the Spirit of God.⁴⁸¹

By 1960, Allan was indicating also that he had become convinced of the efficacy of mass evangelism by two forces: the responsibility as Field Director of 'Tell Scotland' for the evangelisation of the nation, and the experience of the 'All-Scotland Crusade', which in turn re-emphasised for him the need for a revivalist 'personal decision', in which we can see shadows of his own experience at Reims:

I am fully persuaded that there is a place for mass evangelism within the totality of Christian mission...I did not always believe this. In my little book *The Face of My Parish*...I put it on record when I wrote that book eight years ago that, as far as I am concerned mass evangelism has no longer any positive contribution to make in the particular cultural setting in which our work is placed today. I said that eight years ago and I profoundly believed it. The events of these eight years have caused me, under God, to change my mind.

The reason for Allan's change of mind was that: 'I have been compelled to do the work of an evangelist in a way that I never did before. I have come to the point of realising that whatever method we use in the field of men there comes a point at which man is confronted by the eternal claims of the living Christ.'

He concluded that:

I do not believe for one single moment that it is adequate to bear the strains and pressures of our contemporary world, but I believe that within the wholeness of the mission of the Church there must be a place for mass evangelism.⁴⁸²

The consequence of this was a re-direction of the force of his missiology away from congregational growth and towards a re-discovery of the importance of preaching for an instant decision.

Allan continued his evangelistic rallies on Saturday nights once per month at St George's Tron. An extract from his speech at the rally on 5 January 1957 is illustrative of the more confrontational form that they now took, post-Graham:

⁴⁸¹ AA6.2.18.

⁴⁸² AA6.2.19, *Rally Magazine*, from an address in Birmingham on Mass Evangelism c.1960, 3, 4, 16 & 17.

Tonight you are standing at the crossroads, which way are you going to take? The broad road that leads to destruction: or the narrow difficult road that leads to life: ONLY YOU CAN DECIDE...

Will you change direction tonight: repent of your sin, believe in Christ, trust him now? You were born for this. Will you tonight turn over your life to God?⁴⁸³

In Allan's Canadian Campaigns of 1958 to 1961, he would make a call for decision at the end of the service in Graham's style: a report from Winnipeg in 1958 stated his 'sincere brand of revivalism led 30 people down the aisle to declare for Christ.'⁴⁸⁴ In 1962, he made such a call in the context of a Communion Service at St George's Tron, writing that 'I'm becoming more convinced that this kind of appeal should be made more often in our Churches and not be left to evangelistic mission.'⁴⁸⁵

D.P. Thomson despaired in February 1955 at the direction Allan had taken, noting in his diary following an All-Scotland Crusade meeting:

He and I are far apart now in our thinking on many points...Tom Allan has gone over to the 'raise your hand' school of evangelism. A big step down and back to my very great sorrow.⁴⁸⁶

Beyond a respective comparison of likely long-term benefit, how was Allan's pre-1954 missiological thought compromised as a result of Graham?

Rallies were nothing new for Allan and, indeed, were an inherent part of mission in both of his parishes. Allan had opened a 'Week of Witness' at North Kelvinside Parish Church on Saturday 20th March 1948 with an evangelistic youth rally and had carried them out ever since, increasingly under the auspices of a youth movement he founded in May 1951 named United Christian Witness. As has been considered, he continued to do so to great popular success at monthly frequency at St George's Tron in the late Fifties. On Saturday nights in North Kelvinside, he would take the youth group to testify outside the pubs on Maryhill Road. At St George's Tron, he repeated the practice, culminating in a 10pm

⁴⁸³ AA6.2.3, 'Sermons on Matthew'.

⁴⁸⁴ AA6.4.1, Cutting of 'Winnipeg 1958'.

⁴⁸⁵ AA6.11.5, *Evening Citizen*, 08/09/62.

⁴⁸⁶ The Diary of My Life, 16/05/53, quoted by Bardgett, *Scotland's Evangelist*, 317.

service in the Church. Drinkers on Renfield Street were confronted with the nationally known media figure, the friend of the European theological élite, preaching on a wooden platform known as the ‘Witness Box’.

Street preaching and youth rallies were therefore an inherent part of Allan’s mission in the parish. He was continuing the inheritance of the Reformed Church in Scotland, as was Graham.

In open air preaching, Allan was following a Scottish tradition that Stuart Blythe describes, ‘of Celtic missionaries such as Ninian, Mungo and Columba, the preaching of the Reformers such as George Wishart, the open-air preaching at outdoor Communion services associated with Scottish and Irish revivalism, and the field preaching of the Covenanters.’⁴⁸⁷ Preaching to large public audiences had been central to past ‘revivals’, such as Cambuslang in 1742. ‘Revival’ emanating from such gatherings remained a cultural phenomenon, and was experienced in Lewis in 1949-53 and North Uist in 1957-8.⁴⁸⁸

When located in the parish context, the ‘mass rally’ was also part of the Scottish religious psyche. The connection of Allan’s ‘local rallies’ with the Scottish tradition of ‘Holy Fairs’ is marked. As Leigh Eric Schmidt argues, the Scottish communion seasons in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries ‘were envisioned as the bulwarks of Christian community, as the nodal events in a religion that was staged outdoors in wide-open public spaces for all to see and experience.’⁴⁸⁹ Therefore, the misfit for Scotland was not necessarily mission by public preaching to large crowds and calls for decision, particularly in the parish context for the purpose of centring the Church at the heart of the community. Indeed, it could be argued that Allan’s partial rejection prior to 1954 of those methods in favour of a lay, personalised witness was more obviously misaligned.

⁴⁸⁷ Stuart Blythe, ‘Open-Air Preaching: Performing Beyond the Walls’, in Duncan Forrester and Doug Gay (eds), *Worship and Liturgy in Context: Studies and Case Studies in Theology and Practice*, (London: SCM Press, 2009), 253.

⁴⁸⁸ See John F. Ferguson, ed., *When God Came Down: An Account of the North Uist Revival 1957-58*, (Inverness: Lewis Recordings, 2000).

⁴⁸⁹ Leigh Eric Schmidt, *Holy Fairs: Scotland and the Making of American Revivalism*, (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2001, 2nd Ed.), 217.

In my view, therefore, arguing that Allan's pre-1954 model was scuppered simply by the employment of evangelistic rallies is insufficient. The true difficulty for Allan's pre-1954 missiology arose, instead, from its clash with the type of mass evangelism, in the one-off theatrical 'Crusade' style, that was initiated by Graham and replicated by Allan in Canada. It was in this more limited sense that, in my opinion, Ronald Falconer's caustic remark on Billy Graham holds true: 'his message would have been more appropriate to 1855 than 1955.'⁴⁹⁰

Central to Allan's missiology was the 'problem of a cultural gap between the congregation and the parish, the Church and the world'⁴⁹¹ and the identification of the means by which it might be bridged. Allan's incisive writing and practice at North Kelvinside and in the early years of 'Tell Scotland' were focused on re-establishing the Church and the Gospel locally, as the glue that welded society together from its lowest social levels, in order to recover the parochial system.

In the local parish, as Allan wrote of preaching outdoors in Glasgow in 1961, 'to stand in Renfield Street is to be forced to ask ourselves what, in fact, is the message we have for men, and how it is related to their present and pressing needs.'⁴⁹² The type of evangelistic youth rally and open air preaching that Allan exercised in his parishes was compatible with his pre-1954 missiology. It was based on a direct linkage between the preacher and those in the audience, just like the 'Holy Fair', formed by their common social and geographical locus – same place, same class, same problems, same challenges, same God. Its purpose was to demonstrate a passion for the local people and a visible face of a Church which they had previously ignored or rejected, *in conjunction with* the other aspects of a 'missionary parish' of witness and service.

This is the nub of the validation of the type of evangelistic youth rally and open air preaching that Allan exercised in his parishes, and the reason why the rally evangelism of the visiting preacher in the larger arena was largely incompatible – losing the local,

⁴⁹⁰ Falconer, *Kilt*, 81.

⁴⁹¹ James Whyte, Preface to New Edition of *The Face of My Parish*, (Glasgow: Loudon Publications, 1984), iii.

⁴⁹² AA6.11.4, *EC*, 06/05/61.

emphasising the internal rather than incorporating the external. The former was based on a geographical locus as the parish minister, and made Allan visibly known for the passion of his faith to all the people of the parish, particularly those who would never have approached a Church. It provided the opportunity for gathering, fellowship and the inspiration of the parish youth. Furthermore, its demonstration of dedication to the people of the parish, as the outward face of the Church, presented an ethos which could then be replicated in other ways within a constant mission of service by an ardent congregational group. In essence, rallies and open air preaching by the parish minister, or indeed members of the local congregation, could be seen as compatible with the overall missiology of establishing contact and demonstrating compassion for ordinary people in their context.

As Bill Shannon therefore asserts in relation to Allan's St George's Tron rallies, 'it is wrong to describe it as 'following Graham's ways'...this was effective evangelism, not sporadic or short term but sustained, accountable, tested and appreciated. Many congregations and individuals used these rallies as an added dimension of their own work.'⁴⁹³

The 'Crusade-style' mass evangelism of Billy Graham in the Kelvin Hall, or indeed of Allan in Canada, was cut of a different cloth: a visiting preacher with no knowledge or connection to the local context, of social issues or concerns of faith which affected his audience. The fundamental questions of the common people which Allan would bravely respond to on that platform in Renfield Street, could not be voiced before a mass robed choir in an auditorium in a foreign land.

The difficulty in Scotland of translating and merging cultural experience with the Gospel which Allan was trying to solve was instead heightened by the effect of Billy Graham and the All-Scotland Crusade. Allan's missiology emphasised the necessity of making the Gospel 'real' to the lives of ordinary people – Church with the world. The purpose of communication was to weave Christ into every byway of life domestically and in the

⁴⁹³ Shannon, *Tom Allan: In a Nutshell*, 15.

public realm. Graham had nothing to say about that connection, of ‘bridging the gap’ between Church *and* world – his message was Church *over* the world.

This broader point was most cogently addressed in 1955 by Ronald Gregor Smith in lectures given in Australasia, published the following year as *The New Man*. He wrote that:

The Church cannot stand over the world with a whip; nor can it get behind it with a load of dynamite. The whip and the dynamite, where available, would be better used on itself. The world is not, I think, ‘hungry for God’ in the sense of popular conservatising evangelists, who really mean by that a hunger to hear their own words in the old accepted terminology... The world...has had long experience of the unbridled ambitions of the Church over against the world. What the world would really see gladly is an honest and complete recognition, without any ulterior motives...of the existence of the world with all its own principles of movement, hopes and possibilities.⁴⁹⁴

This is the heart of the conflict between Allan’s pre-1955 missiology and the work of Graham.

Gregor Smith concluded that: ‘I do not think that the true note of evangelism is being sounded, or that the invitation to life in community is being offered...in the mass movements of so-called revival which are marked features of Church life in many places today,’⁴⁹⁵ naming Graham specifically, and commenting that such as Graham ‘fix men they do not free them,’⁴⁹⁶ binding them to a loyalty.

Graham’s method of ‘Crusade evangelism’, by contrast to Allan’s prior missiology, served instead to widen the ‘cultural gap’. The prospects of a lasting evangelistic effect rested not upon the direct relevance of the Gospel message and the Church to the everyday lives of the local people, but on the performance and emotion of the occasion, and the dynamism of the remote individual on a fleeting visit. Therein lay the source of the later clash of cultures and of ‘paradigms’, which weakened the missiology. The underpinning

⁴⁹⁴ Ronald Gregor Smith, *The New Man: Christianity and Man’s Coming of Age* (London: SCM Press Ltd, 1956), 68-69.

⁴⁹⁵ Ibid, 83.

⁴⁹⁶ Ibid, 85.

of the Gospel in the local context was far distant from the context of a Crusade rally, and so in espousing that form of mass evangelism Allan was effectively undermining the foundations that he had laid.

Beyond its consequences on Allan's model, did the reversion to Crusade-style mass evangelism with the 'All-Scotland Crusade' of 1955 have a more significant long-term effect on notions of mission in Scotland?

The longer-term difficulty of mass evangelism of the type propagated by Graham, and later emulated by Allan in Canada, was more fundamentally deep-rooted in what it did for the impression of organised Christianity that became known by broader society, which has persisted into the present, and for the view it gave of mission within the Church. In that context, the contrast with Allan's pre-1954 missiology became stark in juxtaposition, and one is then tempted to lionise his pre-1954 position, regret the decision to invite Graham, and imagine 'what may have been' otherwise.

Beyond the short-term, the Crusade had little positive missional impact outwith the pre-existing Church. That, after all, had not been the purpose of the Crusade at all, as Allan had repeatedly stated. In that sense, 'Graham had not been an evangelist, but an old fashioned revivalist. His impact on those outwith the Church was minimal; his main influence had been on Christian believers.'⁴⁹⁷

The implication of that realisation is twofold. His impact on those outwith the Church may have been 'minimal' in terms of conversion or integration into ecclesiastical structure, but Graham's impact was profound in the breadth of its communication through the mass media, and thus in setting a landmark for unchurched Scottish society as to the meaning of Christianity, the foundational tenets of the Gospel, and the content of Christian mission.

The message of Graham that permeated beyond the Church said little of Allan's concentration on the integration of faith and everyday life at the local level. This criticism was voiced most vociferously from the proposal of Graham's invitation onwards by

⁴⁹⁷ James Whyte, Preface to New Edition of *The Face of My Parish*, (Glasgow: Loudon Publications, 1984), vi.

George MacLeod and Ralph Morton of the Iona Community. The attack was essentially that the involvement of Graham was undermining the very principles of ‘Tell Scotland’ which Allan had for the most part drafted and established.

Beyond the Church too, opposition based on Graham’s failure to ground Christianity in everyday lives had a public voice. Hugo Moore wrote in October 1955 in Hugh MacDiarmid’s *Voice of Scotland* journal:

If Dr Graham’s first sermon had declared for the slums instead of being all too obviously addressed to the suburbs; if, having come to save Scotland, he had tried to save it from exploitation; from squalor; from cultural benightedness; from the scribes of the Press and the Pharisees of the Presbytery; from the cunning of the businessmen and the callousness of the politicians: then, he would have been assured of at least a little influence and a little authority in the affairs of the nation, if not his £5,000 a year.⁴⁹⁸

However, more markedly in the social turmoil of the Sixties, the presentation of the Crusade rallies of 1955 and their media exposure created lasting images which have been imprinted upon the consciousness of the Scottish public; that this was ‘Christianity’ and this was ‘Christian mission’, of a bygone age and now a stick with which organised Protestantism could be beaten.

The second lasting effect was upon those within the Church itself, also setting a norm for a definition of what ‘doing mission’ might be, which to an extent persists to this day. The ‘elephant in the room’ was the confusion of the method – to have mass evangelistic rallies whose purpose was internal: to broadcast to the nation a message whose benefit was envisaged not as mission in itself, but as enabling individuals to do mission. If the Kelvin Hall had been closed to the wider public, then the avowed purpose might have been more clearly implemented! Graham and mass evangelism ‘broadened the gap’ and created unfortunate stereotypes of mission and evangelism not only for the wider public, but also for the very Church members who were due to advance in missionary zeal into the parish.

⁴⁹⁸ ‘Voice of Scotland’ VI, 5, quoted by Catriona M. MacDonald, *Whaur Extremes Meet: Scotland’s Twentieth Century*, (Edinburgh: Birlinn Limited, 2009), 285.

Graham and mass evangelism removed the necessity for the local individual or congregational group to properly think out the meaning of the Gospel in their locality and contextualize the form of mission accordingly: 'the process of thinking stopped before it began in the face of the simplistic certainties of Graham's preaching.'⁴⁹⁹

Graham enabled a hibernation of local mission and 'congregational groups' in apathy, thus, 'the majority sat back in happy passivity, assured that the task of evangelism would be accomplished by the 'magic helper' from across the ocean.'⁵⁰⁰

The reversion to Crusade-style mass evangelism was in the end, as George MacLeod had argued in its wake within the Report of the Iona Community to the General Assembly of 1956, '...a confusing factor in the more drawn out and costly witness of a congregation'. It had harboured 'a growing impression that the 'Tell Scotland' *pattern* stems from the Kelvin Hall and can best be fostered by constant recurrence to mass evangelism'. As MacLeod asserted, the focus had been lost along the way, with unfortunate consequences for the grand plan:

Mass Mission was not the instigator of the parish approach and never has been. Mass Mission implies withdrawal of congregational forces to mass centres of experience and renders cold in experience the less exciting fellowships of the ongoing local Church.⁵⁰¹

MacLeod re-asserted that, as a result of Graham, the Iona Community were 'more deeply convinced that the congregation, as it is with all its praise and blame is yet...the sole starting point of mission'.

In conclusion, it is not fully in his reversion to mass evangelism *per se* that we identify the tension and contradiction of Allan's missiology from 1955 onwards, it is in his promotion through Graham and in his own ministry of a form of those evangelistic means which was entirely divorced from the local and the lay, and distant from the Church as

⁴⁹⁹ Whyte, Preface, vi.

⁵⁰⁰ Ibid.

⁵⁰¹ All at Report of the Iona Community to the General Assembly of the Church of Scotland, RGA 1956, 740.

diakonia in the building of *koinonia*. In Allan's reversion to Crusade-style mass evangelism, not only did 'the Tell Scotland Movement never recover from this colossal diversion',⁵⁰² the 'All-Scotland Crusade' had a broader effect: firstly, in sociological terms in the longer-term public projection of Christ, Church, and Christian mission; and, secondly, internally within the Church in undermining the emerging local development and further accentuating the very apathy of the institutional Church which Allan had identified as fatal to mission.

The Crusade thus unwittingly mixed a cocktail of a re-enforcement of institutional inadequacies in the Church at local level, a theological division in the Church at national level, and fostered a skewed vision of the Church in broader society, which in turn left the Church vulnerable and weak to withstand the onrush of secularisation from 1958 to 1963.

Therefore, in the writer's opinion, the primary cause of any 'failure' in the model was in its implementation by the Church, although it could be argued that it was a flaw in the model not to fully anticipate such an impediment. This was due to an over-reliance on the role of a Church which was anticipated to be resistant, to the extent of its apathy and conservatism in practice, and to the intrusion of 'Crusade-style' mass evangelism. These factors were foreseeable as stumbling blocks. Indeed, the arguments against their engagement were all recognised by Allan at the time. They were the *causae sine qua non* of the Church's inability to deliver.

Whilst those factors laid the ground, the factor which finally prevented Allan's inspired execution of the plan from re-inventing the Church as a missionary entity, could not have been so readily anticipated. The *causa causans* was that the unreconstructed Church became tainted, and the vitality of the laity thus dissipated, in the stirrings of a secularised society.

⁵⁰² Whyte, Preface, vi.

Just as the process of secularisation rules out the Church as the necessary object of mission by the laity, so too does Billy Graham's All-Scotland Crusade of 1955 rule out mass evangelism as a tool to recruit and inspire the Church laity, or indeed to bring Christ to those beyond the Church.

3.3 CONCLUSIONS

Despite the frictions inherent within the 'tale of two paradigms' and their adverse consequences in the 'tensions' identified, practical and theological highpoints of Allan's missiology can be identified. These demonstrate that his missiology should not be viewed primarily in terms of practical 'failure' viewed from the present vantage point, but in many ways as a success and source of inspiration.

3.3.1 The Practical Successes of Allan's Missiology

Firstly, at the local level as a parish minister, the achievements of Tom Allan at North Kelvinside and St George's Tron cannot be overstated. He brought about the absolute transformation and regeneration of two dormant congregations within Scotland's largest industrial city. Churches that had been introspective, self-satisfied, formalised, decaying and near-empty when he arrived, were left energised, outward-looking and multiplied. The sheer dynamism of Allan's personality, his obvious commitment and integrity, his empathy for and care towards the ordinary people, and his gifts as a preacher and pastor were integral. Through his public persona and oratorical gifts in the pulpit and national media, united with a deep faith, Allan fulfilled the criteria to meet one of the key building blocks of mission that he had identified, that of effective communication of the Gospel.

In his preaching, public speaking and broadcasts, Allan illuminated and radiated the Gospel, such that he became the embodiment of the depth of communication of faith described by his cohort James S. Stewart in *A Faith to Proclaim*:

Christian preaching begins only when faith in the message has reached a pitch that the man or the community proclaiming it becomes part of the message proclaimed...therefore, the problem of communication resolves itself into a

question of faith: faith in the message, the kind of faith which, being *fiducia* and not mere *assensus*, is an act uniting the messenger to the Christ of whom his message tells...⁵⁰³

Through his public proclamations and action, Allan thus became identified by his congregations and those with whom he interacted nationally and internationally as being not only a messenger of the Christian narrative, but in himself as part of the message. The extraordinary renovation that he achieved of redundant parish congregations relates partly to the abilities of the man in his words and deeds to engage with ordinary people and draw them towards an encounter with Christ and His Church.

Secondly, on a national stage, despite its failings, what was achieved through Allan's missiology still stands well above much that has come before or since. Allan was at the forefront of an extraordinary recovery of the Church and mission in the period from 1946 to 1958: 'if I were asked to sum up in a word what is the most significant development in the Church in the post-war world, I should answer without any hesitation- the rediscovery of the Church's missionary task.'⁵⁰⁴

This was evident in the immediate post-war years as a matter of generality, as D.P. Thomson reflected in May 1950:

The last 4 1/2 years have seen an influence on the Church beyond anything I achieved in the previous 25 – not so vital an influence on individuals but rather the whole policy and outlook of the Church in evangelism.⁵⁰⁵

Furthermore, the additional effect of Allan's missiology on Church and nation in the period immediately following was profound, as Bardgett reflects:

For a time, the missionary banner of the multi-faceted *Tell Scotland* Movement brought multitudes of ordinary Church members both into the streets and to new conceptions of their vocation. Even that level of success was remarkable.⁵⁰⁶

⁵⁰³ James S. Stewart, *A Faith to Proclaim* (London: Hodder & Stoughton, 1953), 45.

⁵⁰⁴ AA6.2.13, 'The Witness of the Layman', Ashlin White Bible Lectures, USA, 1953.

⁵⁰⁵ *The Diary of My Life*, part 17:182: Wednesday 3 May 1950, quoted in Frank Bardgett, *Scotland's Evangelist: D.P. Thomson, A New Biography*, (Edinburgh: Handsel Press, 2010), 189.

⁵⁰⁶ Bardgett, 'The Tell Scotland Movement: Failure and Success', 150.

Despite the gradual process of secularisation to the present, there also remains within the continuing life of the Church, both in pulpit and pew, an older generation who were deeply influenced by Allan and Graham. Bisset comments that, 'there are many who still remember these days with warm thankfulness.'⁵⁰⁷

They may not be repeated. The departure of liberal Christianity towards a 'conciliar', worldly reading of the *missio Dei* in the early Sixties led to the beginnings of an evangelical/ecumenical split that has dogged Scottish Christianity and the World Council of Churches ever since. As the divergence became deeply rooted in theology, the centrality of the humble witness of the lay member also became increasingly marginalised, as it 're-emphasised the role of the theologically trained, the ministers of Word and Sacrament.'⁵⁰⁸

The local effect was that, as Bebbington notes, 'confidence in evangelistic campaigns...waned among the less conservative in the 1960's. In Britain as a whole, as the distance between the poles of theological opinion widened, the scope for centrist enterprise declined.'⁵⁰⁹ The days of large-scale, ecumenically based missionary endeavour had passed.

Secularisation has further rendered the nation to be of a markedly different hue. From a present-day perspective, the method of house-to-house visitation now seems counter-productive in a different social climate, whilst the institutional Church is numerically and publically weak in comparison.

It is therefore unlikely that such a large-scale movement as 'Tell Scotland' will be replicated in the near future. Looking back, if there was ever a 'window' in which a model relying on the institutional Church as agent and object of mission could have borne lasting fruit on a national scale in Scotland, it was in the years 1946 to 1958. Allan was within sight of that achievement, certainly prior to the Crusade of 1955.

⁵⁰⁷ Bisset, 'Training for Evangelism: National Resources for Local Mission', 116.

⁵⁰⁸ Bardgett, *Scotland's Evangelist*, 337.

⁵⁰⁹ D.W. Bebbington, *Evangelicalism in Modern Britain: a History from the 1730s to the 1980s*, (London & New York: Unwin Hyman, 1989), 253.

If Allan's choices had been different, could his model have worked? On one view, as already expressed, a Church that had been held closer to Allan's pre-1954 model of local Church growth might have withstood secularisation in the Sixties with greater rigour, as it may have been rooted more closely in the lives of ordinary people and distanced further from the hierarchy. Then again, maybe the whole model, Graham included, did fulfil the extent of its potential in the circumstances of Church and nation, as Highet suggested in 1960:

Perhaps Churchmen will feel that the best that can be said is that post-war evangelism has worked as a holding operation and that...things would have been much worse without it.⁵¹⁰

Social context may then account in part for both the post-war boom in religion in Scotland from 1946 to 1958 in which Allan played a significant part, as well as the start of the decline in the 'watershed' period of 1958 to 1963.

Sociological explanations are not, however, sufficient of themselves for the heady optimism of the former period. It took the presence and intervention of gifted men in Christian mission on the national and international stage as the catalyst, amongst whom Tom Allan is entitled to a particular prominence. Despite the clear decline in the presence and influence of Scottish Christianity after the moment in the sun from 1946 to 1958, the lasting power of their work for the present should still be positively retrieved.

What might then be recovered for the present from the life and work of Tom Allan?

⁵¹⁰ Highet, *The Scottish Churches*, 121.

3.3.2 Preliminary Missiological Reflections

No matter the roots of its success or failure of the model in its time, as James Whyte comments of *The Face of My Parish* ‘we may need to sit down with the seriousness, honesty and charity which Tom Allan demonstrated..., and learn with him the lessons of the 1950’s.’⁵¹¹

Allan’s life and work offers hope today to a Church divided and in decline, for its lessons in the priority of mission to all Christian expression, of acting in mission through ecumenical unity beyond narrow theological cliques, and of the need to ground mission in the lives and needs of ordinary people.

The most powerful demonstration is in Allan’s concentration on the potential dynamism of the laity within the Church as the most engaging and fruitful conduit in which to express the Gospel within the world. Early in his ministry in June 1950, in a postscript to a published series of radio talks, Allan wrote adroitly of the primary issue facing the Church, the same issue which dominated missiological thinking in the quarter-decade following the war and precipitated all of the divergent strands with which this thesis is concerned:

There is, however, confronting us in the Church to-day a mighty problem. How is this Good News to be communicated to men and women, the vast majority of whom regard the Church as irrelevant, unconnected not only with the pressures and demands of ordinary life, but even with the vague stirrings after God within their own hearts?...

If but one legacy remains, it is the certainty that Allan held that the laity of the Church should prevail, and that only the ordinary people who populated the Church’s pews would prove themselves capable of expressing Christian faith in word and deed to the prevailing culture.

For organised Christianity, Allan’s missiology invites us not to give up. Despite the possible ‘conflict and heartbreak’ involved, it re-affirms the potential strength of an

⁵¹¹ James Whyte, Preface to New Edition of *The Face of My Parish*, (Glasgow: Loudon Publications, 1984), vi.

embattled institution: that it might yet be a radical, prophetic community, a revitalised ‘Church without Walls’.⁵¹²

Allan recognised the temptation of deliberately distancing the focus of the building of Christian *koinonia* and *ekklesia* from the pre-existing Church structure, and of asserting that unsullied individual witness might present a purer picture of Christ without the baggage of institution. Allan, however, dissented from that view, despite his castigation of the Church’s failings, retaining faith in the Church’s capacity to ultimately fulfil its God-given purpose.

Allan’s views on the ‘emerging’ Christian groups of his day are reminiscent of their critics in the present. In their recent attack on the theology in the Church of England of the 2004 Report *Mission Shaped Church*, and its practical application that is ‘Fresh Expressions’, Andrew Davison and Alison Millbank stringently re-assert the value for Christian mission of the Church, and thus of a missional emphasis based on structure, stability and the parochial system.

Davison and Millbank speak of the parish as satisfying the need for local, sacred place, the open inclusivity of worship, the priority of public sacraments, and as a ‘springboard for mission and for engagement with the needs of our contemporary culture.’⁵¹³ The Christian parish community is capable of meeting those ends as it exists as a perfect ‘devolved and mediating structure’. Furthermore, the parish is ‘not just important in nurturing a sense of belonging but for configuring a vision of humanity that embraces a sense of the local and the universal together.’⁵¹⁴ Their solution to the national institutional Church crisis is ‘rebuilding a Christian imaginary in the parish.’⁵¹⁵ They envisage a revitalised Church more capable of responding to a post-modern secularised world, not a

⁵¹² The analogy between the missiology of the 2001 Church of Scotland report of that name and *FOMP* is drawn by Frank Bardgett, “Missions and Missionaries: Home”, Chapter 20 within Colin MacLean and Kenneth Veitch, eds, *Scottish Life and Society: A Compendium of Scottish Ethnology, Volume 12: Religion*, (Edinburgh: John Donald, 2006), 508.

⁵¹³ *For the Parish: A Critique of Fresh Expressions*, (London: SCM Press Ltd, 2010), 169.

⁵¹⁴ *Ibid*, 169.

⁵¹⁵ *Ibid*, 170.

wholesale abandonment of the institution and all those held within it. Their words could almost have been written by Allan a half-century before.

What is needed instead of division between those who exercise experimental forms of ministry and the rump of the Church, is, like Allan, a desire to embrace all possible methods as informing and complementing the others, and thus an incorporation of the theological nuances of ‘Fresh Expressions’ *within* the outlook of the Church and its laity to guide the direction of the Church’s mission: the Church learning from, but not seeking to take over, such forms.⁵¹⁶

The Church must therefore be confident that it may retain a potential role in nourishing and equipping appropriate forms of contextual mission to build Christian communities, but in recognition that it may not be the institutional community that is built up as a result.

More broadly, the novelty and genius of Allan’s model was that, driven to swift action by an overwhelming need to ‘bridge the gap’ with society in the immediate post-war years, its strands were identified, collated, unified, codified and implemented locally and nationally within only eight years. Its legacy is less tainted by later theological trends because Allan defied narrow categorisation, particularly prior to 1954, and was willing to consider the employment of any means of mission possible.

That openness is brought to light in correspondence with Bruce Kenrick, a long-term friend who appears in Allan’s address book as early as 1948.⁵¹⁷

When Kenrick’s book on the East Harlem Protestant Parish, *Come Out the Wilderness*, was published in the UK in early 1963, it was lauded by those pursuing an incarnational approach to mission and social justice. Reviews suggested that mass evangelism was now finished. Allan responded in his newspaper column, praising the EHPP, but concluding:

⁵¹⁶ The Mission and Discipleship Report to the General Assembly of the Church of Scotland 2014 indicates a partnership as from 1 October 2013 between the Mission and Discipleship Council, the Ministries Council and the Church of England ‘Fresh Expressions’ Movement, which may provide a channel for such insight – RGA 2014, Mission and Discipleship Report, 3.1.

⁵¹⁷ AA6.9.

It's not a question of this kind of evangelism or another. It's a question of *using every God-given method* to reach men, wherever they are, with the Gospel.⁵¹⁸

Kenrick wrote to Allan in support, praising him as a minister 'who puts both sides of the Gospel first in his own Church in central Glasgow...with the clear proclamation from the pulpit of the Word that became flesh...and the clear demonstration from the rescue work in the streets of the Word that is becoming flesh.'⁵¹⁹

Late in his life, Allan described his ministry and model of mission as 'walking a tightrope' between the extremes of a salvationist, conservative evangelicalism that was set in opposition to a growing incarnational, liberal ecumenism.⁵²⁰ Distanced from both camps, Allan defied typecast and balanced on the tension of the separating wire, in a distinctive attempt to employ or support all means at hand, whether preaching, rallies, small groups, incarnational living or direct social and political action, in order to communicate the Christian Gospel in word and deed.

In 'walking the tightrope', the diverse nature of much of Allan's missiological approach and its openness to influence from any angle, is a mark of its depth of character, adaptability and maturity, but also proved on the national stage to present a risk to its consistency and direction.

Allan's missiology offers a welcome transcendence beyond the evangelical/incarnational polarisation which has inhibited mission in the United Kingdom for the past half-century. The future of mission lies with the same fusion of the personal and corporate transformative experience of the Gospel with its social responsibility.

It is Allan's ability to formulate a dynamic mission plan that was theologically rich and contextually appropriate by utilising contemporary thought, combined with his willingness to cross any divides in the name of Christ, that establishes a locus for his

⁵¹⁸ AA6.11.6, EC, 22/02/63, (my emphasis).

⁵¹⁹ AA6.11.6, letter Bruce Kenrick to Tom Allan, dated 28/02/63.

⁵²⁰ From conversations with Bill and Betsy Shannon, Pitlochry, 22 November 2010 – Bill Shannon being Allan's student assistant in North Kelvinside, assistant minister at St George's Tron, and close friend.

missiology to be heard in the present. The same ‘both/and’ missiology to act in speech and action across the theological divides is required.

Allan’s work was at the ‘beginning of the end’ for Bosch’s ‘modern, Enlightenment paradigm’ of Church and mission, whose dénouement we may be approaching. Allan’s missiology thus encompassed varying strands, with inevitable friction and no little contradiction. On the one hand, it adhered to a ‘top down’ loyalty to the institutional Church, on the other to a ‘bottom up’ dedication to the empowerment of the individual. It dismissed the immediate inheritance of the inter-war years of social quietism, sectarianism and occasional bursts of parish mission, but yet saw fit to reclaim an age-old evangelism of preaching for a decision.

In Allan’s attempted admixture of both ‘modern’ and ‘postmodern’ elements, he speaks to us of a struggle that continues for present day Christianity in Scotland. He faced the challenge of how to live missiologically in recognising that one social milieu might be drifting towards oblivion but with stubborn resistance, whilst seeking to implement elements that potentially might establish new ground under stolid opposition. The conundrum for him, as now, was which aspects of each might be compatible with the state of society in order to form an effective whole, to which we shall later turn.

Allan’s life’s purpose, both in a spiritual and practical sense, followed the title of a 1959 series for the *Evening Citizen*: to ‘Rescue the Fallen’.⁵²¹

In doing so, Allan fulfilled his own criteria for discipleship which he spoke of in his final sermon: ‘it is for this that we are called as Christians...that the world should look beyond us to Christ, seeing perhaps in us a fraction of his image.’⁵²²

⁵²¹ AA6.5.7.

⁵²² MacDonald, ed., *A Fraction of His Image*, 35.

The following Chapter considers selected streams of lay-focused missiology that ran concurrently to Allan in Scotland and were also dedicated to seeking a contextualised Gospel and Church interwoven with the lives and struggles of ordinary people: by the incarnational ministry of the Gorbals Group in the late Fifties and Sixties, exercising ministry on the streets of a Glasgow slum as an extreme manifestation of contextualisation beyond the Church, inspired by the Church amongst the poor in the East Harlem Protestant Parish, New York City; and the implementation of mission of lay formation and empowerment in participative ecumenism, towards a radically renewed inter-denominational Church structure, sought by Robert Mackie, and by Ian Fraser under the auspices of Scottish Churches House.

CHAPTER 4 – SCOTTISH AND AMERICAN COMPARATIVE STREAMS

St. Bernard once said: ‘A mission suggests the heavy labour of the peasant rather than the pomp of the ruler. For if you are to do the work of a prophet you need the hoe rather than the sceptre.’ It is the sceptre that the Church in Scotland holds that is to many the offence. For they see in it not the symbol of recognised authority nor the symbol of loving service, but rather of privilege and dictation. To wield the hoe is to be content to serve in love. It is to get down to the roots of life, even though the stones be many⁵²³, *Ralph Morton, 1953*

INTRODUCTION

How did the work of Allan’s contemporaries serve to complement and enhance his own in developing the contextualisation of the Gospel to the ordinary and the everyday?

By way of comparison, the thread of mission development is followed now as it led beyond a mere ‘accommodation’ that sought only to permit the transmission of an immutable Gospel, and the jolt of initial contextualisation from the work of Tom Allan, towards the further development of a language and mode that might more fully integrate the work of the Church and the message of the Gospel with the lives of the people.

If we contrast the apparent failure of the ‘Forward Movement’ to galvanise the parish Church idea with the successes in Scotland of the immediate post-war period, the difference may lie partly in the social climate, but also in the deeper concentration on the laity in Church and mission; by laity and Church embracing an outward vision, seeking a Christianity rooted in daily experience and looking to correlate the Gospel, with a prominent voice in social and political issues. Rather than a ‘come to Church’ movement seeking to impose an unchanging, ecclesiastically enshrined strain of Protestantism *upon* the parish, mission became an ‘encounter the Gospel’ movement seeking to align the ecclesiology of Protestantism *with* the parish.

⁵²³ T. Ralph Morton, *Evangelism in Scotland*, (Geneva: World Council of Churches, 1953), 54.

Disappearing, at least amongst the more forward-thinking clergy, was a notion of supremacy through the power and domination which Protestantism had asserted in Scottish society over the centuries – of a desire to create a Protestant ‘parish-state’ bent on eradicating theological difference. The direction was towards a Church and parish built from a greater humility, seeking dialogue, understanding and relationship.

The questions asked were: did the process of contextualisation such as in Allan’s model go far enough? Did the re-vitalisation from within of the existing Church as agent and object of mission form a necessary pre-requisite, given the impediments to mission that it produced, as identified in Chapters 2 and 3? Could other methods withstand the growing secularisation of society in a more robust form, or even embrace it as the work of God? Could the Church not be contextualised instead by avoiding the pre-existing Church, by being started anew, and with ordinary people thus granted the space for empowerment and formation without the baggage of the past? Could this occur through (a) the literal re-location of its buildings and clergy to the street front (the East Harlem Protestant Parish); or (b) the deliberate shunning of the old institution in favour of a life on the streets from which God might grow a new form of Church community (the Gorbals Group Ministry)? Or could it not be contextualised by (c) allowing the laity of all Church denominations to meet on neutral ground to develop common strands that would revolutionise and unite their institutions (Robert Mackie, Ian Fraser and Scottish Churches House)?

Concurrent with the work of Tom Allan, there were separate extensions in such directions by those mentioned of the concept of mission, also stretching beyond ‘evangelism’ by oral proclamation alone, towards a more holistic vision of the presence of the whole people of God in the world. They offer further illumination of what Allan was seeking, and contribute to the development of a thesis based on what the historical picture of that period may mean for us now.

This chapter will thus consider:

- 4.1 The Church *On* The Street - the East Harlem Protestant Parish (“EHPP”), and its intended translation to Scotland, being

- 4.2 The Church *of* The Street - the Gorbals Group Ministry of 1957-78; with reference also to
- 4.3 The Church *as* Reformed by the Ecumenical Laity -Robert Mackie, Ian Fraser and Scottish Churches House

4.1. THE CHURCH *ON* THE STREET - THE EAST HARLEM PROTESTANT PARISH 1948-68

Protestants operate under a principle that requires them continually to struggle with institutionalism and are not surprised to find the sin of ‘morphological fundamentalism’ emerging. By this term...we mean simply the rigidity of the structures of Church life...Congregations of today, in the grip of morphological fundamentalism, assume that their present patterns of organization and activity are divinely ordained and unchangeable. In every age, the Church must seek from God, in the light of its situation in the world, insight into the appropriate structures for its life and mission.⁵²⁴ *Bill Webber, 1964*

4.1.1 Formation & Purpose

The East Harlem Protestant Parish (‘EHPP’) sought the delegation of Church to a local level, by its physical re-location to storefronts on the main streets of the city. Its location was American, its inspiration lay in Scotland from the work of the Iona Community, and its Church-centred concepts of mission chimed with those of Tom Allan, to whom acknowledgment was paid. As the Church was geographically and politically stuck in middle-class suburbs, the answer was taken to be the formation of new Churches positioned afresh at the heart of the urban slums, but still however allied to a pan-

⁵²⁴ George W. Webber, *The Congregation in Mission: Emerging Structures for the Church in an Urban World*, (New York: Abingdon Press, 1964), 13.

denominational structure above. Such new Churches would be dedicated in theology, liturgy and social witness to the lives of those around them.

The simple missiological concept was thus the more permanent contextualisation of 'Church' through the physical re-location of the institution out of its ecclesiastical redoubts and directly into the local. Whilst the missiology of Tom Allan as expressed in *The Face of My Parish* and within the 'Tell Scotland' Movement sought to re-locate the *place* of contact, the *identity* of those who made contact, and the *language* and focus of the message used, now the *physical location* of 'Church' would seek to complete 'contact, communication and consolidation', by bringing the Gospel and liturgy to an immediate interaction with the realities of urban living.

To diminish the challenges of 'cross-cultural translation', the Church as institution would merge into the prevailing culture by a physical relocation to literally become part of the street. The three storefront Churches and one associated Church of East Harlem⁵²⁵ were complementary and united within a Protestant 'parish' that was geographically defined. They remained of themselves 'the Church' to which local people belonged, but without necessary reference for the local people back to an existing 'mother Church', albeit they were financially reliant on multi-denominational support in the background. Those Churches were divided downwards into 'agape meal' house groups, which engaged in Bible Study, prayer and discussion to form much of the liturgical, social and political agenda for the storefront congregations. The Church remained as institution, but was consciously designed to be fresh, new, devoid of baggage and borne of its surroundings.

The period of the public prominence of Tom Allan and George MacLeod at the forefront of Scottish Church life co-coincided with that of the EHPP, as did many of their common missiological premises and prior influences. Both MacLeod and Allan were to acknowledge the EHPP, MacLeod in particular as he visited East Harlem and commended

⁵²⁵ The three storefront Churches were the 100th Street Church at East 100th St, the Church of Our Redeemer at East 102nd St, and the Church of the Son of Man at East 104th St, along with the associate Church based in an old Church building formerly comprising an Italian Protestant congregation, namely the Church of the Ascension at East 106th St. At its height, the EHPP had fifteen full-time paid staff, including pastors, administrators, and a doctor.

those who were affiliated to the Iona Community who sought to replicate its ministry in Glasgow. Furthermore, the EHPP recognised its debt to the Community, and indeed to Allan's *The Face of My Parish*. As the historian of the EHPP, Benjamin Alicea comments:

The mid to late fifties were the golden years of the EHPP. This era saw the ideal known as the Iona Community take form in an American urban ghetto. National acclaim and ecclesiastical credibility focused on this para-Church ministry engaged in social action, congregational development and revitalization, theological reflection and Christian discipleship.⁵²⁶

Whilst students at Union Theological Seminary, New York City, Bill Webber and Don Benedict produced a fledgling 'Proposal for a Store-Front Larger Parish System' in December 1947,⁵²⁷ to begin an experimental ministry in nearby East Harlem, on the other side of Central Park, starting in summer 1948. In summary of their intended method, they stated (my emphasis):

The approach rests upon this simple hypothesis: that a team of trained Christian workers, responsive to basic human needs and thoroughly committed to the gospel of Christ as the only final answer to all human need, can identify themselves with the lives and problems of families in a disorganized city neighbourhood and build a local fellowship of people seeking together the Christian solution to their problems. *The method is to bring the Church to the people where they live rather than try to bring the people to the Churches.*⁵²⁸

The focus, like that of Tom Allan, would be in the regeneration of a serving Church within the parish system, as reflected in the name. Benedict later recalled in his autobiography, in words which could have been written across the Atlantic by Allan:

Whereas "parish" might mean little to the people, we hoped to put meaning back into the word. We wanted to return to Protestantism the outgoing concept of serving everyone in a given geographical community rather than staying with the inbound idea of Church as the central place of worship attracting like-minded people from anywhere.⁵²⁹

⁵²⁶ Benjamin Alicea, *Christian Urban Colonizers: A History of the East Harlem Protestant Parish in New York City 1948-1968*, (unpublished PhD Thesis, Union Theological Seminary, 1988), 201.

⁵²⁷ EHPP Archive, Union Theological Seminary, New York City, Box 7 and also *Union Seminary Quarterly Review*, March 1948, Vol III No 3, 17-23. Webber and Benedict were soon joined by Archie Hargraves as the three initial pastors of the EHPP.

⁵²⁸ *The East Harlem Project for Christian Service*, March 4, 1948, 2, Box 7.

⁵²⁹ Don Benedict, *Born Again Radical*, (New York: The Pilgrim Press, 1982), 61.

As the Mennonite Hugh Hostetler, then seminary student and later the pastor of East 102nd Street storefront Church, wrote in 1949 on the motivation for the EHPP, again in language similar to that employed by Allan in *The Face of My Parish*:

If East Harlem is a condemnation of our culture as a whole, it is even more so of the American Protestant Churches; for if “they found the Church not there”, it is precisely because our Churches are sectarian, cater to the middle and upper-classes, and complacently ignore our responsibility for, and in, this ghetto. [Our Churches] must adopt radically different approaches to contemporary problems.⁵³⁰

As well as a liturgy and ecclesiastical structure that was ‘of the street’, this meant social and political action, if the Church was to regain its connection with the threads of the society around it. For Webber and Benedict believed that Christianity had abandoned East Harlem to its fate, and that therefore an essential constituent element must be that ‘a Church in these areas will be a militant, aggressive organisation, unafraid to fight for justice on economic and social levels.’⁵³¹

4.1.2 Work

The storefront Churches were an obvious, visual connection with the streets around – doors open, pastor available, simple Sunday worship directed to the life outside. The Gospel developed a resonance in that context, with Webber reporting:

As we dig into some of the immediate problems of human need... we break through into ever deeper human problems. It is then that the Gospel has its real relevance, then that it must speak to these men and women, who like the rest of us, are alienated from God and full of antagonism toward their fellowmen.⁵³²

The EHPP administrator, Flossie Borgmann, later to work in Scotland with the Gorbals Group Ministry in its early years, emphasised the importance of mere physical presence, of ‘being there’ in the attempt to ‘come alongside’ the people:

From the beginning the staff has sought to avoid a feeling of paternalism by living with the people in the same apartment buildings, sharing their problems and

⁵³⁰ Hugh Hostetler ‘They Found the Church Not There’, *The Mennonite*, Feb 8 1949, 4-6, 5, within Box 22, EHPP Archive.

⁵³¹ *Proposal for a Store-Front Larger Parish System*, 1st December 1947, 7, Box 7, EHPP Archive.

⁵³² East Harlem Revisited, *Union Seminary Quarterly Review*, November 1949, Vol. V No.1, 25-29, 29.

concerns and working with them as brothers in Christ. Nearly every staff member lives in East Harlem and is available day and night to meet the problems which come to him.⁵³³

The obvious and prominent location of the minsters and staff in the storefronts threw them into coping with everyday emergencies in the chaotic life of East Harlem: broken families, unemployment, welfare issues, poor education, ill health, bad housing, alcoholism and drug abuse, and police brutality. The theological, ecclesiological and liturgical response of the EHPP was predicated on these social circumstances, hoping to provide the platform for the people of the parish to take over the direction of those key areas, as Borgmann wrote:

To meet these needs the Parish has tried to develop a program which ministers to the total community. The staff is convinced that only as the Church has a vital concern for all of the immediate problems of daily living will the message of the Gospel come alive. They are concerned with a healing ministry, but also with a vigorous and unending effort to fight injustice. They need to provide a channel through which the people of the Parish, as citizens of a democracy, can take action to overcome the injustices from which they suffer.⁵³⁴

As regards worship, the liturgy was also to reflect the concerns of the street, seeking a responsive biblical resourcing, as Webber stated in words that would be echoed later by Ian Fraser in *Bible, Congregation and Community*:

The key word is *participation*, which implies the necessity of *recall* and *re-enactment*. The story of salvation must become the personal history of the worshipping congregation as it recalls in worship the mighty acts of God and as it re-enacts those events so that they become living realities, contemporary and compelling.⁵³⁵

⁵³³ Florence Borgmann 'The Church in East Harlem', *The Messenger*, 'National Organ of the Evangelical and Reformed Church', Oct 6, 1953, 8-10, Box 23, EHPP Archive.

⁵³⁴ Ibid.

⁵³⁵ George W. Webber, "New Wineskins of Worship", *Concern Magazine*, Vol 4, Number 3, March 1962, 16-17, Box 22, EHPP Archive. Such connections were to be drawn not only in speech but in literal re-enactment in public processions and demonstrations. Walter Fyfe recalls the service at the East 100th Street storefront on New Year's Eve 1953, where the sins of the old year were symbolically placed into a full-sized coffin, which was then taken down the street in procession at the turn of the year and publicly immolated - Interview with Walter and Elizabeth Fyfe at Govanhill, Glasgow on 18 March 2011.

The common ground with Allan and MacLeod as a matter of principle is readily apparent. Firstly, there was, like them, a diagnosis of a Church whose inherent character had become hidebound in a culture alien to its surroundings; whose mission and ministry was attractional rather than incarnational; who had failed the poor and the outcast, and which had little or no concern for the human circumstances surrounding it.

Secondly, like Allan and MacLeod, a solution would still be sought within the Church, with the rebuilding of a ‘missionary parish’. This would also be a Church of very different hue, whose purpose was to build a dynamic local community. The lives of the people of the community in integration with their faith would form the basis for mission, liturgy and social action. From the position of the clergy, the watchwords would be presence, availability and personal sacrifice. From the position of the laity, they would be biblical empowerment, personal formation and emancipation.

In these *foci*, the lines of common purpose with Allan and MacLeod are illuminated, which is initially surprising when one considers the radically different geographical and cultural context, and the absence of personal contact in the early years between those forming the EHPP and their counterparts in Scotland and mainland Europe. The connections become clearer, however, when considering the influences acknowledged by Bill Webber.

4.1.3 Missiological and Theological Foundations

(a) Mission

The story of Allan, MacLeod, Webber and the Gorbals Group is intimately interwoven. The East Harlem Protestant Parish was a remarkable ‘double’ cross-cultural contextualisation of ideas of Church, ministry and mission – a missional arc or bridge between Europe, Scotland and the USA – initially from Scotland and mainland Europe to the USA in the formation of the EHPP, and then back to Scotland from the EHPP in the work of the Gorbals Group Ministry.

During his time as Harry Emerson Fosdick Visiting Professor at Union Theological Seminary in the winter of 1954-55,⁵³⁶ George MacLeod went to the East Harlem Protestant Parish and later described it in *The Coracle* as ‘the most important Protestant experiment in America.’⁵³⁷ He wrote further: ‘the East Harlem Experiment claimed it was Iona that first set them thinking. If this is really so, their cerebral development is now vastly in excess of ours.’⁵³⁸

Alicea identified MacLeod as ‘the theologian and Churchman who inspired the parish.’⁵³⁹ Webber explained the formation and central tenets of the Community in his work *God’s Colony in Man’s World* of 1960, not least the Iona spiritual disciplines adopted by both the EHPP and the Gorbals Group Ministry, describing the Community as ‘a very striking witness against the power of evil.’⁵⁴⁰ Quoting liberally throughout that work from MacLeod’s *One Way Left*, he described MacLeod as a ‘voice of authentic prophecy, calling us back to a fresh vision of God’s design.’⁵⁴¹

Webber was further influenced by Tom Allan, correctly identifying the connection between the Iona Community ‘Mission of Friendship’ and the Allan model, in writing:

While not himself a member of the Iona Community, Tom Allan in *The Face of My Parish* gives a full scale and very moving picture of a parish mission that followed substantially the pattern developed by Churches served by Iona Community ministers. This is as good a book on “practical theology” as one can find, for in the best sense it combines theology and practice.⁵⁴²

Not only did Webber become acquainted with MacLeod when he visited the EHPP, he met with Allan at Bossey, Switzerland in July 1960 at the symposium for a theology of

⁵³⁶ From which, like Geoff Shaw after him in 1954, George MacLeod had graduated STM in 1922 following his undergraduate degree at New College, Edinburgh.

⁵³⁷ ‘What Do You Think of American Religion’, *The Coracle*, No.28, March 1956, 9-26, 23.

⁵³⁸ The overt influence of the Iona Community on the formation and ethos of the EHPP is also noted by Ronald Ferguson, *Geoff: The Life of Geoffrey M. Shaw*, (Gartocharn: Farnham Publishers, 1979), 42.

⁵³⁹ Alicea, *Christian Urban Colonizers*, 201.

⁵⁴⁰ George W. Webber, *God’s Colony in Man’s World*, (New York: Abingdon Press, 1960), 97.

⁵⁴¹ Webber, *God’s Colony in Man’s World*, 154.

⁵⁴² *Ibid*, 122.

evangelism under the auspices of the WCC, and on the same trip visited the Gorbals Group Ministry in Glasgow.

Like Allan, Webber's other principal influences were also European. He declared that 'one of the most exciting developments in recent years in the Christian world has been the worker-priest movement in France,'⁵⁴³ just like Allan citing the work of Godin and Michonneau. At various stages, Webber further acknowledged the influence of Ted Wickham of the Sheffield Industrial Mission, of Hendrik Kraemer and Suzanne de Dietrich from Bossey, the evangelical academies in Germany, and the industrial mission in Mainz, Germany of Horst Symanowski.⁵⁴⁴

In that context, the apparent anomaly is less stark when one realises that, as well as later feeding back to Scotland through the Gorbals Group Ministry, the EHPP took inspiration in its very existence from Allan and MacLeod, and from the same European missiologists and practical lay movements which had inspired Allan.

(b) Theology

Webber's experiences in the US Navy in the war drove him towards ministry, leading him to apply to Union Theological Seminary in late 1945 in these terms:

I feel a tremendous urge to spend my life and my full efforts in the work of the Church, in dealing with the problems of people, in promoting the social gospel.⁵⁴⁵

This desire on Webber's part found nourishment in the teaching of Paul Tillich and Reinhold Niebuhr in his years as a Union undergraduate from 1946 to 1948. Webber cited what became Chapter 15 of Tillich's *The Protestant Era*, entitled 'The Protestant Principle

⁵⁴³ See George W. Webber, 'European Evangelism and the Church in America', *Christianity and Crisis*, November 1958, 155-158.

⁵⁴⁴ See Webber, *ibid*; Alicea, *Christian Urban Colonizers*, 153-6; and Bruce Kenrick, *Come Out the Wilderness*, (London: William Collins & Son Ltd, 1962), 118-20, 126-7.

⁵⁴⁵ George W. Webber, *Application of Admission*, Union Theological Seminary, New York, December 1, 1945, quoted by Alicea, *Christian Urban Colonizers*, 57.

and the Proletarian Situation', as especially influential upon his early thinking within the EHPP.⁵⁴⁶

One can readily recognise Webber's later appreciation within the EHPP of Protestantism, the Church and the poor from its pages, and why Webber too would later speak out against the mass revivalism of Billy Graham. The chapter began with an uncompromising diagnosis of the paltry attempts of Protestantism to address urban social need:

The proletarian situation, in so far as it represents the fate of the masses, is impervious to a Protestantism which in its message confronts the individual personality with the necessity of making a religious decision and which leaves him to his own resources in the social and political sphere, viewing the dominating forces of society as being ordered by God.⁵⁴⁷

The effect on the life of a minister in that context was clear for Tillich (my emphasis): 'the Protestant principle overcomes the gap between the sacred and the secular spheres, between priesthood and laity. *Protestantism demands a radical laicism. There are in Protestantism only laymen; the minister is a layman with a special function within the congregation.*'⁵⁴⁸

Thus the inspiration for Webber's search, like that of Allan, was that of seeking to point *the Church* in the direction of 'radical laicism' in order to address the gap between the Church and the urban poor, to empower ordinary people in mission.

Furthermore, Webber's teaching on mission at Union was heavily influenced by the recently departed Professor of Missions, Daniel Johnson Fleming, who foreran much of the developing ideas of 'mission as inculturation' with his concepts of 'empathy' and 'identification'; the latter concept to be revisited by the later biographer of the EHPP, New College alumni Bruce Kenrick in his 1958 book, *The New Humanity*.⁵⁴⁹ In words which

⁵⁴⁶ Paul Tillich, *The Protestant Era*, (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1948). Webber later described *The Protestant Era*, as 'an excellent analysis of the role of religion in the crisis of today', *God's Colony in Man's World*, 155.

⁵⁴⁷ Tillich, *The Protestant Era*, 237.

⁵⁴⁸ *Ibid*, 251-252.

⁵⁴⁹ Bruce Kenrick, *The New Humanity*, (Glasgow: Collins, 1958).

might encapsulate the work of the Gorbals Group Ministry, Fleming wrote in 1950 that in seeking to enter into community ‘our ideal is to achieve what psychologists call “empathy” with the people whom we wish to help...thus to gain a true and complete understanding to effective service, one must think oneself into the total mental and emotional attitude of the other.’ In considering such a ‘life of identification’ in echoes of the language of Bonhoeffer, Fleming asserted:

In these days solidarity of this kind has overtones relevant to interracial, international, and ecumenical relations little envisioned in the early period of missions. Spiritual community will hardly be achieved unless there are those who are willing to face hardship.⁵⁵⁰

It was from within this ‘seed-bed’ of education and war experience that both Webber and Benedict would formulate their plan for East Harlem, and in turn directly influence mission in Scotland.

Webber interpreted the calls for world evangelization under the ecumenical banner to include not simply proclamation (*kerygma*), but also community (*koinonia*) and service (*diakonia*). It was only in this rounded collation of the three central themes of mission that ‘God’s Colony’ would be established: like Allan reflecting a fundamental reliance on the Church as agent of mission, to be a reformed, redeemed community.

As regards *koinonia*, once more like Allan he believed in a force akin to the *rayonnement*, a radiation of the Gospel from a reformed Church community:

We begin with the witnessing community, the fellowship of the Church. For I am persuaded that in the depersonalized world of the twentieth century, it is the very life of the colony which will confront the world with the power of the gospel. The world needs desperately to see love in human relationships, to see harmony between men of incredible human differences, to see peace amidst the most

⁵⁵⁰ Daniel Johnson Fleming, *Living as Comrades*, (1950), 6-7, 166-67, quoted by Norman Thomas ed., *Classic Texts in Mission & Christianity*, (New York: Orbis, 1995), 211-12.

fantastic chaos and disruption. By its very existence, without doing anything other than being a community of God's people, the colony witnesses to the gospel.⁵⁵¹

As in Geoff Shaw's example in the Gorbals Group Ministry, this entailed 'the discovery that ministry had to involve unconditional acceptance.' Consequently, in contrast to the popularly-held approach in Scotland in the inter-war years, the 'approach by way of morality was rejected, partly because it was useless, partly because it was irrelevant, but above all because the pastors slowly realised that morality with which their own faith had always been involved often stood in firm opposition to the Gospel.'⁵⁵²

Mere presence, and 'critical solidarity' were central. As Webber wrote, in similar terms to John Harvey's later description of the basis of the Gorbals Group Ministry:

The purpose of the colony is nothing less than to "be there" in the midst of the real world, wherever men live and work and play. Only in being there can the colony hope to serve men at the point where their needs, frustrations, sickness, and fears emerge. The colony must intrude itself in some way into those places where men are living out the deep concerns of their lives.⁵⁵³

He recognised therefore the necessary connection in contextualisation of not only knowing the gospel, but of the means and location of communication:

The Christian must not only understand fully the meaning of the gospel; he must also know about the secular world in which his life must be lived in order that the relevance of the gospel may be communicated. We dare not concentrate either on knowing the world or knowing the gospel or on means of communication, but the three must be bound indissolubly together if the secular relevance of the gospel is indeed to be a fact in our time.⁵⁵⁴

This further translated itself into a dislike by Webber of Billy Graham's style of evangelism in ignorance of context, and indeed of any fleeting 'visiting evangelism',⁵⁵⁵

⁵⁵¹ Webber, *God's Colony in Man's World*, 70.

⁵⁵² Kenrick, *Come Out the Wilderness*, 89, 91.

⁵⁵³ Webber, *God's Colony in Man's World*, 82.

⁵⁵⁴ *Ibid*, 88-89.

⁵⁵⁵ *Ibid*, 122-126.

promoting instead a central *Theology of the Laity*, as in Hendrik Kraemer's 1957 book of that name.⁵⁵⁶

The principles thus to be derived for 'bridging the gap' between Church and world from the example of the EHPP are ably summed up by John Harvey:

...following God into the real and total world, refusing to dictate the agenda, being willing to pay the price for obedience, believing in and seeing the emergence of the small local Church, and accepting the need for a full corporate and personal discipline in every aspect of our lives.⁵⁵⁷

4.1.4 Issues and Difficulties

The advantage in considering an analysis of the EHPP is not only to recognise the shared ground in principle with their Scottish counterparts, and to speculate on whether their efforts to contextualise the very location and meaning of the Church can be deemed 'successful', but also to see key markers of corroboration in the hindrances and challenges which such a similar model provided in a radically different cultural context. This vantage point may thus inform us in the consideration of Allan's work, and in conclusions for the nature and extent of its continuing relevance.

There were problems in practice in the ministry of the East Harlem Protestant Parish which recurred with an uncanny similarity in its Scottish offshoot, and also in part with Allan's work, in particular: (a) the difficulty of bridging the cultural gap, the struggles with low formal Church membership and an absence of the growth of local, lay leadership; and (b) the sometimes contradictory demands of evangelism by proclamation of the Gospel, as compared to social action in Christ's name.

⁵⁵⁶ Ibid, 134-5.

⁵⁵⁷ John Harvey, *Bridging the Gap: Has the Church Failed the Poor?* (Edinburgh: Saint Andrew Press, 1987), 97.

4.1.4.1 Bridging the Cultural Gap & The Apostolate of the Laity

The necessity of bridging the cultural gap with the mainly Puerto Rican and black American population of East Harlem was obvious from the start. As Benedict recalled, using language until then associated with ‘foreign mission’: ‘The real function of a missionary is to make the gospel come alive within the context of the racial, social and cultural patterns of the people, and so we had to learn a new culture.’⁵⁵⁸

Whilst studying in his Masters year at Princeton Theological Seminary in 1954-55, Bruce Kenrick worked as a student volunteer with the EHPP. He was to return in 1960 to collate material for his bestselling book on the EHPP, *Come Out the Wilderness*, published in 1962.⁵⁵⁹

In his Masters dissertation at Princeton, Kenrick identified as the first priority in an area of urban deprivation such as East Harlem, in words in harmony with the later experiences of such as Vincent Donovan amongst the Masai in *Christianity Re-Discovered*⁵⁶⁰ and David Bosch’s ideas of ‘interculturation’,⁵⁶¹ that the Church goes in:

As much in the capacity of a learner as a teacher. It would be useless to preach the Gospel in terms which were acceptable to and, perhaps, understandable by middle-class Christians, if the bearers of the Gospel do not possess the categories of thought with which to make the Good News their own. Nor should it be the aim to hammer those same thought forms into a handpicked elite in East Harlem and reproduce an alien middle class Christian island with no power to transform the foreing waters washing its bourgeois shores.⁵⁶²

Thus the aim was for an encounter between Church and people, such that the Church would be changed to become more closely aligned to the culture, and the culture in turn would also re-align in accordance with the contextualised Christianity and Church. In order for the ‘interculturation’ process to take hold to produce an indigenous hybrid, there

⁵⁵⁸ Benedict, *Born Again Radical*, 60.

⁵⁵⁹ (London: William Collins & Son Ltd).

⁵⁶⁰ Vincent J. Donovan, *Christianity Re-Discovered*, (New York: Orbis, 1982).

⁵⁶¹ David Bosch, *Transforming Mission*, 456.

⁵⁶² Thesis written in 1955 by Bruce Kenrick, grad student at Princeton, 78, Box 26, EHPP Archive.

was no doubt that the element of what Webber described as ‘cultural intrusion’⁵⁶³ by a mostly white, middle-class and educated clergy would need to be supplanted in time within the EHPP by lay leadership. Only through local, lay leadership could the strands of culture, Christianity and Church be brought together, otherwise the EHPP might remain a paternalistic, ‘top-down’ message-bearer, seeking to implant foreign concepts from one culture to another.

The demise of the EHPP was hastened by the absence of such formed lay leadership that might have enabled its continuance, in conjunction with social changes in the urban landscape which diminished many of the attempts to build a sense of community. Knowledge of that issue was at the forefront of deliberations within the EHPP, for in the words of the pastor of the East 100th Street Church, Norm Eddy:⁵⁶⁴

The long-range objective is to develop a Church structure simple and flexible enough so that it will be able to run itself, with its own leadership. Only then will the ideals of the Parish be able to be transmitted widely throughout our crowded city areas and be a witness to the Churches everywhere.⁵⁶⁵

However, that objective was not realised. The local leadership did not emerge, as despite the all-encompassing dedication to the social challenges around, the numbers of lay people involved in the storefront Churches, and thus the pool for local leadership, remained perilously low. By way of example, in March 1953 at the East 100th Street Church where Walter Fyfe, later of the Gorbals Group Ministry, would work that winter, the average adult attendance on Sunday was about 15 (it had been about 25-35 at the same time in the previous year), with only three adult men ‘...deeply committed to the Church, and 4% of families on the block with two or more members in a Church programme, which had been a specific objective.’⁵⁶⁶

Thus, Norm Eddy realised the need for ‘...the developing of a Church pattern fitted to the theology and social action in which we believe, but which is essentially of the people,

⁵⁶³ As quoted by Harvey, *Bridging the Gap*, 93.

⁵⁶⁴ Norm Eddy led the ministry at that storefront following the departure of Benedict in April 1953 to Cleveland, Ohio to begin a similar ministry to the EHPP.

⁵⁶⁵ Kenrick, *Thesis*, 78.

⁵⁶⁶ EHPP Archive, Box 2, File 2, 18.

financed, organized and run by them...The objective of the next year and a half is to crystallize a core of committed Christians and to help put them into the service of the Lord, in developing a theonomous community in the neighbourhood.⁵⁶⁷

The failure to achieve this goal of indigenous ownership and significant lay numbers within the institution was by the Sixties to prove the undoing of the EHPP, and indeed in time of the Gorbals Group Ministry. In the case of the EHPP, the end emerged through a resurgent black consciousness in the throes of the Civil Rights Movement, which came to question why educated, white, middle-class clergy might be claiming to set the agenda in Harlem, in combination with the destruction of communities by their relocation from the slums to newly-constructed 'projects', destroying the physical base and human resources of the Parish.

4.1.4.2 Evangelism versus social action

This became a fundamental theological issue which split the EHPP, just as it had caused the collision of Tom Allan and George MacLeod over Billy Graham and contributed to the demise of 'Tell Scotland'. Unlike its progeny, the Gorbals Group Ministry, the EHPP had been an overtly Christian effort from the start. Its founders viewed its role as a crucible for the development of the Church elsewhere and so, also unlike the Gorbals Group, courted publicity for its operation.⁵⁶⁸ The failure to develop the street Churches numerically and to engage local leadership led to disappointment, tension and friction between the members of the group ministry, based on their varied theological appreciations of the balance between an overt evangelism by proclamation and the exercise of social action.

⁵⁶⁷ *A Plan for the 100th Street Church*, March 15, 1953, 10, by Norm Eddy, circulated to Group members, EHPP Archive, Box 5.

⁵⁶⁸ Part of the avowed aim at formation in 1948 was stated as: '...To explore methods of personal evangelism and small fellowship groups which may provide new techniques for Christian ministry in underprivileged areas... [and]...to provide a training center for seminary students who feel called to missionary service in the disorganized areas of the inner city' - *The East Harlem Project for Christian Service*, March 4 1948, EHPP Archive, Box 7.

Webber was in no doubt where the concentration must remain, supporting those working in the Parish:

It is significant that the ministers have been quite clear in keeping their evangelistic function at the center of their emphasis. They have not tried to become social workers or recreation leaders, but pastors who have a concern with making life more livable as well as preaching the gospel of Christ to people who had never heard it preached with meaning or relevancy before.⁵⁶⁹

In practice, this focus became more difficult to emphasise as time went on. The struggle within the EHPP was highlighted most acutely by William Stringfellow, who went to work in East Harlem as a lawyer, on graduating from Harvard Law School in 1956.⁵⁷⁰ In a mixed review in 1963 of Kenrick's *Come Out the Wilderness*, Stringfellow reflected:

From what I observed in the six years I lived in East Harlem-a year and a half of that as a member of the so-called group ministry-I would agree that the parish has come a long way in acknowledging that the Bible is indispensable to mission...

The clergy and people of East Harlem did not learn all this...easily or quickly. Those who came to the neighbourhood to establish the parish were evidently motivated and informed by simplistic (if sincere) and naïve (if wholesome) and nontheological (if humanistic) views than by regard for the truth, activity and trustworthiness of the Gospel...

[The EHPP story] continues through the struggle to differentiate secular charity from love, settlement houses from Churches, ideology from theology, social planning from Christian witness and mission, ecclesiastical politics from recognition of the authority and reliability of the indigenous laity.⁵⁷¹

As Kenrick recalled in the book itself, it was Stringfellow who from his arrival in East Harlem 'attacked without mercy those members of the Group who were neglecting the word of God. He was rude, he was ruthless, he was rigid, and he was right.'⁵⁷² The return of Letty Russell in 1958 to be the pastor of the Church of the Ascension on East 106th Street led to a re-invigorated program of bible study to powerful effect.⁵⁷³ However,

⁵⁶⁹ 'Young Men and the Ministry', George W. Webber, *Religion and Life*, Winter 1949-50, 7-8, Box 24, EHPP Archive.

⁵⁷⁰ See 'From Harvard Law School to East Harlem', by James W. Hoffmann, *The Presbyterian Life*, 1 Feb 1961, 12-14, Box 24, 'Newspaper Articles'.

⁵⁷¹ Review of *Come Out the Wilderness* by William Stringfellow, *Christian Century*, 3 April, 1963, 431-432, 432, Box 22, EHPP Archive.

⁵⁷² Kenrick, *Come Out the Wilderness*, 125.

⁵⁷³ *Ibid*, 131 and 173-4.

conflict was suppressed in the name of harmony, which in Kenrick's words 'led to a concentration on...the galvanizing of the Church into action instead of helping its members to come alive with the life of Christ.'⁵⁷⁴ This absence of the banner of the Gospel contributed further to the dissipation of lay leadership within the Church, leaving it further ill-equipped as a long-term proposition.

4.1.5 Summary

The EHPP was the practical outworking of a Christianity that was radical, prophetic and incarnational. It sought to bridge the gap between the Church and the poor, to overcome the considerable obstacles of cross-cultural communication, in a contextualisation of the location of the Church, and the terms and means of expression of its message. In doing so, it sought to create via experimentation and error an urban Church which would translate across America and the western world. Whilst it spawned similar exploratory ministries, those offshoots were in one aspect fundamentally different: they eschewed the formation of institutional Church completely in favour of forming co-operative communities. The concentration within the EHPP on the role of Church as institution became increasingly distant from global ecumenical mission from the early Sixties.

The EHPP was closer in theology and ecclesiology to Tom Allan than to its later offspring in Scotland, the Gorbals Group Ministry, in its adoption of 'neo-orthodoxy' as against a social gospel, its primacy of the vocal expression of the Gospel in mission, its insistence on the formation of public places of worship and of 'Church' and congregation, its use of Bible study and teaching, its dependent relationship to the central institutions of the Church, and the prominence of its ministers as clergy.

The missiological practices of the EHPP were an extension of Allan's model with the same fundamental goal – from the contextualisation of Gospel and Church would emerge a radicalised laity who would transform the Church into a body which would more

⁵⁷⁴ Ibid, 122.

effectively radiate the Gospel amongst the people, and transform the Church's life into a propagation of faith within a 'missionary parish'.

In the remaining concentration on the Church as institution, albeit radically altered in form, as the source and venue of return of mission, the Gorbals Group Ministry were to move away in practice from its intended emulation of the EHPP.

The Iona Community which had inspired the EHPP also remained a Church organisation, focused on the training and development of urban mission and Church growth through ministry training. George MacLeod's support for the Church Extension programme into the new towns of Scotland in the Fifties, or a re-imagined Church in East Harlem, was a natural reflection. MacLeod was less comfortable with the 'para-Church' community such as would develop in the Gorbals.

4.2 THE CHURCH OF THE STREET-THE GORBALS GROUP MINISTRY, 1957-78

It is the duty of Christians today to make experiments in co-operative social living which will point the way to this new living society.⁵⁷⁵ *Ralph Morton, 1951*

The fact of the Incarnation, lived out in the lives of Christians and in the lifestyle of the Church, is, and always will be, the clearest statement on the Christian Social Vision in this and any society, in this and any age.⁵⁷⁶ *John Harvey, 1993*

Introduction

If contextualisation could lead to the Church being physically re-located to the building on the street, and its liturgy and social outlook re-modelled accordingly, could any

⁵⁷⁵ T. Ralph Morton, *Household of Faith*, (Glasgow: The Iona Community, 1951), 104.

⁵⁷⁶ John Harvey, 'What There is to See', within *Seeing Scotland, Seeing Christ*, Occasional Paper No. 28, Centre for Theology and Public Issues (New College, University of Edinburgh, 1993), 75.

remaining institutional baggage not be dispensed with, so that mission would begin on the street itself?

The Gorbals Group Ministry exercised a penetrating, incarnational Christian presence as an intentional community in a Glaswegian Victorian slum then undergoing radical transformation and regeneration. Approved to proceed by the Presbytery of Glasgow in October 1957, its principal period of operation lasted until the departure of key members in 1967/68. The Ministry continued until the death of Geoff Shaw, its *de facto* leader, in April 1978.

At the end of his history of the EHPP, Benjamin Alicea draws a salutary conclusion: ‘The EHPP is a monument to the success and failure of the main-line Protestant Churches to face the challenge of ministry to the poor in American ministry, not a transferable model of urban ministry.’⁵⁷⁷ Indeed, whilst they catapulted urban ministry forward in terms of its thinking, its lasting legacy in mission, as Alicea suggests, is that ‘the influence of the Parish is conveyed in part by the former parish staff who now do ministry...the Parish was a training ground for Union Seminary field work students and graduates.’⁵⁷⁸

Bruce Kenrick recognised that the influence of the EHPP had spread not only within the USA, but to Scotland, England and India.⁵⁷⁹ In England, the EHPP was replicated in Notting Hill, after three Methodist ministers had attended UTS and volunteered with the EHPP.⁵⁸⁰ In India, the Scots missionaries, George and Dorothy More, friends of both David Lyon and Walter Fyfe, created an intentional community at Allipur, influenced by the ‘intense poverty that was all around us.’⁵⁸¹

⁵⁷⁷ Alicea, *Christian Urban Colonizers*, 252.

⁵⁷⁸ *Ibid*, 252-253.

⁵⁷⁹ Kenrick, *Come Out the Wilderness*, 194.

⁵⁸⁰ David Mason, Geoffrey Ainger and Norwyn Denny. Two of Ainger’s essays are within the EHPP archive at Union Theological Seminary, New York. The experience of the Notting Hill ministry in the Sixties is recounted by David Mason in *Good News from Notting Hill*, (London: Epworth Press, 1967), and also Kenneth Leech, *The Soul and the City: Urban Ministry and Theology 1956-2006*, 2006, 11, as reproduced at www.arts.manchester.ac.uk/mcpt/publications/index.htm, 11. After working in the EHPP and in Bengal (1956-59), Bruce Kenrick worked in the Notting Hill ministry, from where he co-founded the homeless charity ‘Shelter’.

⁵⁸¹ George & Mary More, *This is Our Life in Central India*, (London: Edinburgh House Press, 1962), 12.

As regards Scotland, inspired as it was by George MacLeod and the Iona Community, as well as the French worker-priest movement, the EHPP welcomed in the Forties and Fifties as volunteers a series of like-minded young men from the Scottish theological colleges. They were mostly studying on the one-year postgraduate Master of Sacred Theology ('STM') course at Union Theological Seminary, and were then able to work within the East Harlem Protestant Parish through the continuing connection with UTS of Bill Webber as a part-time Professor. The Scottish students were, for the most part, also inspired by MacLeod, Iona and the worker-priests. They thus brought to Union and the EHPP a theological outlook and temperament which had been shaped by the same sources as the EHPP itself, and were ripe for its influence. They not only maintained in some cases lifelong friendships with each other, but would in turn, moulded by their experiences in New York, play a key role in the further contextualisation and inculturation of Christianity in Scotland and beyond. They included at UTS, David Lyon (1948-49); Geoff Shaw and Walter Fyfe (1953-54); Andrew Ross, (1957-8); and Douglas Alexander (1959-60); as well as Bruce Kenrick at Princeton (1954-55).

4.2.1 Formation of the Gorbals Group Ministry

Two young ministers in training, Walter Fyfe of Govanhill, Glasgow and Trinity College, and Geoff Shaw of Inverleith, Edinburgh and New College, met at an SCM conference in Paris in 1951. It was there that Fyfe also met two 'worker-priests' from the docklands of Marseilles.⁵⁸² That encounter with the French 'worker-priest movement' of 1943-54, together with his knowledge of the nascent EHPP, would radically change his perspective on theology, ministry and the Church.

Fyfe as an undergraduate student had already decided that 'the parish ministry was not for him':

Possessed of an acute mind and a love for the dialectics of political and religious thought, Walter felt the Church had largely sold out on the working classes...At

⁵⁸² Interview with Walter and Elizabeth Fyfe at Govanhill, Glasgow on 18 March 2011.

Trinity, Walter made up his mind that his future ministry would be conducted as a labourer in industry.⁵⁸³

As fate would have it, both Shaw and Fyfe were to undertake postgraduate study on the STM course at UTS in the academic year of 1953-4. Fyfe had done so deliberately so that he could seek to work voluntarily within the EHPP.

The period that Fyfe and Shaw spent in New York, studying at UTS under Paul Tillich and Reinhold Niebuhr, and in particular their exposure on voluntary student attachment by working in the EHPP through Bill Webber, was to crystallize the nature of the incarnational ministry that Fyfe and Shaw were drawn towards:

It was in the crucible of East Harlem that Geoff Shaw became a twice-born man...the East Harlem experience constituted a revelation for Geoff. It was not simply an addition to his experience: it transformed and revolutionised his way of looking at the world.⁵⁸⁴

On their return to Scotland, Shaw and Fyfe resolved to implement an EHPP ministry in Scotland, along with Fyfe's Trinity College friend, John Jardine.⁵⁸⁵

'Street-chapels in every street' were mooted as a way forward in Scotland following the Second Assembly of the World Council of Churches in Evanston, with Stephen Neill writing in *Life and Work* in May 1954: 'we have to get the Gospel back to the places where people live, in simple forms, and in terms of small and manageable fellowships.'⁵⁸⁶

These 'small and manageable fellowships' were being enacted within the parish structure in England and by the Iona Community in Scotland in the House Church Movement, and in the worker-priest movement in France which had begun to spread to the United Kingdom.⁵⁸⁷

⁵⁸³ Ferguson, *Geoff: The Life of Geoffrey M. Shaw*, 40.

⁵⁸⁴ *Ibid*, 39.

⁵⁸⁵ And the latter's wives, Elizabeth Fyfe and Beryl Jardine. Shaw resolved to remain unmarried, and did so until he entered politics in the Seventies.

⁵⁸⁶ Stephen Neill, 'Fellowship of the Church Must Begin on the Street', *Life and Work*, May 1954, 114.

⁵⁸⁷ See Henri Perrin, *Priest-Workman in Germany*, (London: Sheed & Ward, 1947) & Maisie Ward, *France Pagan? The Mission of Abbé Godin*, (London: Sheed & Ward, 1949). For a full discussion in relation to the UK, barring the first worker-priest, Ian Fraser in the Tullis Russell paper mill in Markinch, Fife, see John Mantle, *Britain's First Worker Priests*, (London: SCM Press, 2000), 76-136.

The excitement brought by the lay ethos of Evanston, ecumenical growth, the experiments in work/ministry and in Christian communities outwith the parish structure, and the attempts to mobilise the laity nationwide under the umbrella of the 'Tell Scotland' movement, had put 'grassroots' Christianity on the agenda and laid the foundations in Scotland for the Gorbals Group Ministry.

Shaw, Fyfe and Jardine toured Glasgow and selected the Dickensian slum of the Gorbals area of Glasgow as the location of their ministry. They envisaged Church from the 'bottom up', rather than 'top down': to start and end with and for the people; to begin where they were, and to 'let the world set the agenda'. There would be no inherited assumptions as to how the Christian faith of the Group's members should be publicly expressed.

Despite this open-endedness, the primary purpose of the Gorbals Group Ministry at its formation was fairly clear: the creation of Church and the dissemination of the gospel, where the existing structures were failing. That the model was East Harlem was overtly acknowledged in the discussions and foundational proposals of the Group.⁵⁸⁸

The cornerstone of the EHPP was 'store-front' Churches, with accessible worship and liturgy in everyday language. This was the founding intention of the Group too. Thus, in the light of the refusal of the Presbytery of Glasgow to sanction the Group in 1955,⁵⁸⁹ Walter Fyfe wrote in the *British Weekly* that:

In East Harlem, the meaning of 'ministry' is obvious in a way that it never is in divinity college harangues about homiletics. So also is the meaning of 'liturgy',

⁵⁸⁸ The initial proposal of the Group to the Presbytery of Glasgow in 1955 stated flatly: 'we acknowledge that it is inspired largely by East Harlem Protestant Parish, New York' – within the Gorbals Group Papers, 2. Following Presbytery approval, the second Minute of the group of 15th October 1957 proposes that Geoff Shaw should visit East Harlem, and notes: 'EHPP: not copy, but learn from their experience'. This was rejected at the next meeting on 24th October 1957, so he could begin work in a Gorbals paper shop!

⁵⁸⁹ The Presbytery rejected the initial overture of the Group in 1955 with concerns on its relationship to the institutional Church, and encouraged Shaw, Fyfe and Jardine to show their commitment to the project in their work prior to any further application. They did so in the period 1955 to 1957 by Shaw's work in youth ministry at St-Francis-in-the-East, Bridgeton; Jardine as Youth Secretary of the Iona Community, and Fyfe by being locum Minister at Hall Memorial Church, Dalmarnock and beginning his future life as a 'worker-priest' as a labourer in the Harland and Wolff shipyard. In the time of the Gorbals Group Ministry, Fyfe was later to work in the Dixon Blazes ironworks and the local authority Highways Department.

for there is a very real bond of worship between the storefront communities which make up the Parish.⁵⁹⁰

However, it was clear from the start that, unlike the EHPP, the Group wished to distance themselves from the institutional Church as it existed. Rejecting a proposal from the Presbytery to operate as a 'shock-troop platoon' in three Gorbals parishes, Shaw wrote to Fyfe in April 1955:

[This] scheme is simply a mechanical device for getting more people into a congregation- it does not envisage any questioning of present Church structure – it is the structures as much as the methods that we are calling into question.⁵⁹¹

In seeking to rally the Church behind the idea, the support of Ralph Morton, Deputy Leader of the Iona Community, was beneficial, as was the public pronouncement in their favour by George MacLeod following his visit to the EHPP, writing in *The Coracle* in March 1956:

Of course we should have at least one counterpart experiment in Britain. We have not the racial problem but we have great areas in our larger cities where the pattern, ecclesiastical and cultural, has broken down...A deeper pathos is that there are men in Scotland who have worked in East Harlem, are prepared for a similar identification and to work at minimum wage in close-knit lodging, to succeed, or maybe to fail, in our differing scene. Dare we turn to them and say we are satisfied with our organisation as it is?⁵⁹²

The Memorandum by the Group on their second application to Presbytery in 1957 was again on EHPP lines:

The aim of the experiment would be to provide each small natural community (street, part street or block) with a centre of worship...As time went on we would hope that the centre of worship would become real in the lives of many people and that a congregation would serve this small area.⁵⁹³

⁵⁹⁰ *British Weekly*, 1 September 1955, 7.

⁵⁹¹ Within the Gorbals Group Papers.

⁵⁹² 'What do You Think of American Religion', *The Coracle*, No.28, March 1956, 9-26, 25.

⁵⁹³ Within the Gorbals Group Papers. It stated further that the scheme's purpose was motivated because so many in poorer areas 'were outside the life of the Church'.

Permission being obtained from Glasgow Presbytery at the second attempt in October 1957, the original members of the Fyfes, the Jardines and Shaw proceeded immediately to move into the Gorbals to begin their ministry.

As regards the involvement of clergy with the Group Ministry, for a while in the Sixties the future Bishop of Edinburgh, Richard Holloway, was associated.⁵⁹⁴ At its height in 1965, there were ten members of the Group – three Church of Scotland ministers, two wives, two schoolteachers, two social workers, including the renowned Lillas Graham,⁵⁹⁵ and Holloway as an Episcopal priest.⁵⁹⁶

The main addition to their early ranks, however, was John Harvey, who became a member of the Gorbals Group Ministry along with his wife, Molly. He did so full-time from 1966 to 1968, but also part-time for three years beforehand whilst a student at Trinity College and assistant minister, and for three years thereafter whilst a parish minister in the Gorbals.

Karl Barth being barely mentioned where Harvey studied theology at Trinity College, Glasgow in the early Sixties, Harvey brought to the Group a training in the radical theology which was to dominate world Protestant ecumenical thought and expressions of urban mission, throughout the Sixties and beyond. Based on the ‘de-mythologising ethic’ of a ‘religionless Christianity’, it was a captivating mix of the incarnational living of Charles de Foucauld and the Little Brothers of Jesus, the theology of Bultmann and Bonhoeffer, and the teaching at Trinity of Ian Henderson and Ronald Gregor Smith.

Thus whilst we can see in Tom Allan, and indeed in Geoff Shaw who attended New College from 1950 to 1953, the theological markings of a ‘neo-orthodox’ theological education in the immediate post-war period and the prominence in teaching of that time

⁵⁹⁴ See his autobiography, Richard Holloway, *Leaving Alexandria: A Memoir of Faith and Doubt*, (Edinburgh: Canongate Books, 2012).

⁵⁹⁵ On her later work at Braendam, see Elaine Downie, *Stand Up Straight: The Story of Lillas Graham and Braendam's Families*, (Glasgow: Braendam Link, 2003).

⁵⁹⁶ Richard Holloway, ‘The Gorbals Group: An Experiment in Service’, in Barry Till ed, *Changing Frontiers in the Mission of the Church*, (London: SPCK, 1965), 38-43.

of Barth and Brunner, a fresh radical approach was emerging of which John Harvey was part. As A.C. Cheyne has written on the theological position of the Kirk at the time:

The state of affairs around about 1960, therefore, was that whereas ministers who had been up at University during or just before the Second World War quite frequently favoured the neo-orthodox position, those who were either senior or junior to them generally refrained from going so far. Indeed, some of the abler students of divinity were being drawn not to Barth but to the neo-liberalism of Bultmann and his interpreters at Glasgow, Ian Henderson, John Macquarrie and Ronald Gregor Smith.⁵⁹⁷

The demand to place the Church centrally in its role of mission, and to rely on the Church's laity for the task, had been dissipated for many of Harvey's generation. That focus attuned with Fyfe's calling to live outwith the Church as a worker-priest. In practice, the Group in the Sixties was further driven by the developments in world missiology between the gatherings of the Word Council of Churches in New Delhi in 1961 and Uppsala in 1968, when, under the influence of J.C. Hoekendijk and M.M. Thomas, globally the 'Church in missiology disappeared in the sixties like dew before the sun.'⁵⁹⁸

4.2.2. Principles in Practice of the Gorbals Group Ministry

The Gorbals was described in 1965 as 'the worst slum in Britain and is rapidly deteriorating. It is a sump of human degradation...with one of the worst over-crowding problems in Europe...Everywhere there is filth and rubbish: the ally of disease and vermin.'⁵⁹⁹

In appalling social conditions, at their heart the group lived up to the passage from Luke 4:18-19 to bring good news to the poor, taken from the Iona Community and the EHPP,

⁵⁹⁷ A.C. Cheyne, *The Transforming of the Kirk: Victorian Scotland's Religious Revolution*, (Edinburgh: Saint Andrew Press, 1983), 217. John Harvey is named as one of 'a goodly percentage of bright students' by the Professor of Practical Theology at Trinity, Murdo Ewen MacDonald, in his autobiography *Padre Mac* (Isle of Lewis: The Islands Book Trust, 2008, 2nd Ed.), 178. Harvey was inducted as minister at Laurieston-Renwick, Gorbals on 5 December 1968, and remained there until 1971 when he became the Warden of Iona Abbey. He later served as parish minister at Raploch, Stirling, in Inverclyde and at Govan Old, Glasgow, as well as being the leader of the Iona Community from 1988 to 1995 and Moderator of Glasgow Presbytery in 1998.

⁵⁹⁸ Johannes Aagard, Danish missiologist, quoted by T.V. Philip, *Edinburgh to Salvador: A Historical Study of the Ecumenical Discussion on Mission*, (Delhi & Tiruvalla, India: ICSS & ISPCCK, 1999), 80.

⁵⁹⁹ Christian Action, *The Gorbals 1965*, 1.

which formed their constitution and purpose, and was read at each weekly communion. The principles of the Gorbals Group Ministry in that light are summarised by Harvey:⁶⁰⁰

- (a) 'First and foremost, to be there.'⁶⁰¹ The core was compassion, availability and dedication to the people in an expression of Christ's love. Harvey's first words in the inaugural edition of the 'Gorbals View' in 1967, the first local newspaper created by the Group, sum it all up: 'We care about the Gorbals. Mainly because we live in it.'⁶⁰²
- (b) To seek to achieve 'critical solidarity' with the people.⁶⁰³ This meant not only Christian presence, but also shared low income and accountability for any excess to the community, a shared meal once per week where decisions would be made, and communal worship and communion.⁶⁰⁴
- (c) Social action. What became the defining and almost overwhelming driving force of the Group was to address, alongside the people, the living conditions and social problems which they faced. Thus housing action was a key priority, as was extensive work with the young at nursery and youth level, police and court representation and political activism with the Labour Party and CND.

This was realised within the Group by embracing Bonhoeffer's totem that 'when Christ calls a man, he bids him to come and die.'⁶⁰⁵ It entailed a total availability for the people of the Gorbals, expressed through an open door and a commitment to care for, affirm and represent them in every manner possible. The extent of the dedication was manifested in the multitude of people passing through Shaw's flat at 74 Cleland Street seeking help, advice, answers, shelter or just acceptance.

⁶⁰⁰ John Harvey, 'Geoff Shaw', within Blackie, Nansie, ed., *A Time for Trumpets: Scottish Church Movers and Shakers of the Twentieth Century*, (Edinburgh: Saint Andrew Press, 2005), 155 -160.

⁶⁰¹ Harvey, 'Geoff Shaw', 155.

⁶⁰² Within the Gorbals Group Papers.

⁶⁰³ In the phrase of Danilo Dolci, Italian social reformer who visited the Group, quoted by Harvey, 'Geoff Shaw', 156. Sicilian priest Fr Borelli was a further significant influence.

⁶⁰⁴ Later a source of contention when other denominations were present in the Group.

⁶⁰⁵ From *Cost of Discipleship*, as quoted by Harvey, 'Geoff Shaw', 160.

Shaw's declaration that 'nothing is too low for the cross' was lived out day after day in the mayhem and squalor. It was proved in a willingness to serve and to accept everyone unconditionally.

It is a moving testament to Shaw that both Harvey and Ferguson cite as a source of constant inspiration a note from Shaw's diary relating to a boy described by Harvey as 'wild, chaotic, but full of possibilities',⁶⁰⁶ who had come into the Group's orbit, of whom Shaw wrote: 'Have known that he was very mixed up, and have proceeded on basis of refusal to reject, no matter how foul.'

- (d) To bring the Gospel and the Church to the people. However, 'in the event, no recognisable indigenous Church came into being as a result of the presence of the Gorbals Group.'⁶⁰⁷

In the initial goal of 'bridging the gap' between the Church and the poor by way of indigenous Churches organically growing on the street fronts, in the admission of Harvey, 'the Gorbals Group cannot be said to have succeeded.'⁶⁰⁸

The report of the Presbytery of Glasgow of 1960, whilst endorsing the continuance of the Group for a further three years, was the first to raise sharp questions about the development of a local, identifiable community which, in some sense, might align itself with Christianity:

They do not seem to be witnessing clearly to a definite need for corporate worship...while the emphasis on witnessing by sharing in life and not merely by preaching is to be welcomed, the witness of the word...seems to have been undervalued.⁶⁰⁹

By 1968, the unity of the Gorbals Group was beginning to dissipate, its members were leaving and its ministry had reached a watershed, albeit it continued until Shaw's death in

⁶⁰⁶ Harvey, 'Geoff Shaw', 157.

⁶⁰⁷ Ibid, 160.

⁶⁰⁸ Harvey, *Bridging the Gap*, 107.

⁶⁰⁹ Presbytery of Glasgow, Home Mission Committee, 'Report on Gorbals Experiment in Evangelism' 1960, within the Gorbals Group Papers.

1978.⁶¹⁰ Recent attempts by John Harvey to initiate a form of Church growth as a full-time member of the Group had not borne fruit.⁶¹¹ Shaw was candid in his reflections in 1968 on the record of the Group in his report to the Home Mission Committee.⁶¹² In the passage related to Church and the dissemination of faith, he boldly stated that ‘during the ten years of the Group’s existence no one has become a full member of the Church of Scotland and maintained membership over any length of time.’⁶¹³ Shaw wrote of ‘the inevitable sense of failure that the basic faith of most of the members of the Group has not in fact been adequately shared with others outside the Church.’⁶¹⁴

4.2.3 The Causes of the ‘Failure’

4.2.3.1 Factors Related to the Model

(a) The jarring of the principal purposes of the Group, to be social redeemers and Church builders, in collision with the demands of belonging to the institutional Church.

This conflict proved a major impediment to clearly setting out some form of ‘mission statement’ and core ethos. John Harvey illustrated this underlying dilemma in the light of John T. Robinson’s distinction between ‘experimental’ and ‘exploratory’ ministries.⁶¹⁵ The former, as seen in the EHPP, retains ties with the central Church and implies the creation of some form of congregation or community, thus being exposed to review by

⁶¹⁰ John and Beryl Jardine had left in 1961. Walter and Elizabeth Fyfe left the Group in early 1967 over the abandonment of the economic discipline. Richard and Jean Holloway departed to the USA at around the same time. John and Molly Harvey were to leave from full-time participation in late 1968, as John took on the charge of Laurieston Renwick in the Gorbals.

⁶¹¹ In Harvey’s period as a full-time member of the Group from 1966 to 1968, he was engaged in attempting to initiate ‘Church’ in the Gorbals where it had not appeared in the prior decade of the Group. He attempted bible study groups and small worship services. It was a near impossible task after so long. For a fuller description, see Harvey, *Bridging the Gap*, 106-107.

⁶¹² Which was judiciously edited for the 1968 ‘Blue Book’, being the official Reports for the General Assembly!

⁶¹³ 1968 Report, 9 – Gorbals Group Papers.

⁶¹⁴ *Ibid*, 13.

⁶¹⁵ John T. Robinson, *The New Reformation* (1958), as quoted by Harvey, *Bridging the Gap*, 81.

that Church in terms of results and numbers. The latter, as exemplified by the French worker priests, however, presupposes no set forms and exercises no demands.

The Group was caught from the start between those two stools. Harvey, as a comparative latecomer to the Group, identified this tension in the founding documents, which in his view:

Reveal...a worrying confusion of the exploratory and the experimental in their approach, which was to have quite serious consequences later on, for it seems as if they wished to have their cake and eat it. They wanted to have the freedom to go out into the pagan world of Gorbals, confident that some form of little Churches would spring up round them (and confirmed in this view by East Harlem's experience), but not at all clear what the relationship of these little Churches would eventually have to the mainline Churches to which the three of them belonged (and not at all clear, either, on how they were going to deal with the denominational divide of Gorbals, between Catholic and Protestant, which was to prove one of the major barriers to the appearance of any such little local congregations). They wanted to be explorers, but along certain well-defined lines; and they wanted to keep in touch with, and have the blessing of, their sending base, the Church of Scotland.⁶¹⁶

In dealing with the overwhelming nature of social need in the Gorbals of the Sixties, in 'letting the world set the agenda', and in the light of the rapidly changing social and theological landscape, the Gorbals Group Ministry 'began in the company of the East Harlem Protestant Parish, and eventually ended up much more in the company of the French Worker Priests.'⁶¹⁷ In other words, the departure was from an embrace of *kerygma* as *koinonia*, to *kerygma* as *diakonia*.

There was no agreed vision as to how 'Church' would arise. As Richard Holloway wrote in 1965:

In the Gorbals Group we are not very clear about where the Church is being led during this 'darkness of mission'. We are not sure of very much. But we are here and perhaps we are waiting to become the Church - waiting for the Spirit.⁶¹⁸

⁶¹⁶ Harvey, *Bridging the Gap*, 101-102.

⁶¹⁷ Ibid.

⁶¹⁸ Holloway, 'The Gorbals Group: An Experiment in Service', 43.

(b) Was group-based ecumenism generally an ill-equipped missiology in a Scottish working class area of that era, in the light of sectarianism?

The Group held a healthy ecumenical understanding of the nature of sacrament, ministry, incarnational service and Christian unity,⁶¹⁹ but the people they sought to serve carried a cultural legacy of division which had been encouraged by both the Church of Scotland and Roman Catholic Church, and which was lived out in the West of Scotland in cultural touch points such as the Old Firm football division - 'are you a Billy or a Tim?' This had little effect on engagement with the breadth of social work undertaken by the Group, but the Group itself noted that 'the point of separation comes at formal worship.'⁶²⁰ Put simply, sectarianism put paid to the prospect of Catholics worshipping with Protestants, and thus hindered the emergence of an ecumenical 'group Church'.

Ian Henderson in his coruscating attack on structural ecumenism in *Power Without Glory*⁶²¹ defined the furore over the 'Bishop's Report' of 1957-59 as an illustration that those outwith educated circles found it difficult to thole the prospect of communing with other Christian denominations, which historically they had been taught to mistrust, in particular by the Church of Scotland of the inter-war period. Was the Group an example too of a practical ecumenism in favour within theological colleges but at odds in *praxis* not only with the sometimes reactionary conservatism of the suburban Kirk, but also with the working class people they sought to serve?

(c) An alternative proposition is a criticism of incarnational ministry per se, as the evangelical wing of the reformed Church would consider it.

The view of Donald MacLeod of the Free Church of Scotland on the failure of the Group is a classic expression of the evangelical view on the role of personal salvation in mission.

⁶¹⁹ For example, in its openness to admit the Episcopalians Richard Holloway and Lillas Graham within the Gorbals Group, and lay people who were agnostic.

⁶²⁰ Shaw, 1968 Report, 9 – Gorbals Group Papers.

⁶²¹ Ian Henderson, *Power Without Glory: A Study in Ecumenical Politics*, (London: Hutchison & Co., 1967), 117.

He viewed the cause as derived from the missiology of the Iona Community which, in his opinion:

...does not believe in sin. It has room for the incarnation, but not for the atonement, and simply cannot bring itself to summon individuals (including the poor) to repentance. Terrified of proselytising, it refuses to evangelise.⁶²²

What this somewhat simplified viewing of the theology of the Gorbals Group omits is their assumption, like Allan, MacLeod and the EHPP before them, that it was only in the expression of the Gospel by social action in community that the true Gospel would come alive, and thus be made apparent to ordinary people so that they might come to faith.

4.2.3.2 Factors Related to the Group

(d) The internal theological and ecclesiological differences

As John Harvey states, ‘from the beginning, the Group struggled, and at times fell out, over how a new form of Church could grow in this rapidly disintegrating, secularised, and depressed context.’⁶²³

The ‘theological and political radical’,⁶²⁴ Walter Fyfe, ‘became irritated with suggestions that bringing in only a few Church members was a shortcoming of the Group.’⁶²⁵ By contrast, Jardine, Shaw and Harvey all worried over the apparent ‘failure’ to create EHPP-style storefront Churches, or in any other organic form.⁶²⁶

These differences, Shaw recognised on reflection, ‘underlie some of the indecisiveness of the Group in regard to the formation of some form of congregation.’⁶²⁷

⁶²² In a highly controversial article to commemorate fifty years of the Iona Community, entitled ‘Question Marks and Garbage Heaps’, *Life and Work*, August 1988, 21-25, 24.

⁶²³ Harvey, ‘Geoff Shaw’, 159.

⁶²⁴ Ferguson, *Geoff*, 40.

⁶²⁵ *Ibid*, 119.

⁶²⁶ For Jardine, it may have been ‘because we are not at all sure what we really believe in the Church.’ *Ibid*.

⁶²⁷ 1968 Report, 3 – Gorbals Group Papers.

(e) The move from theology to politics by Geoff Shaw

As for forming ‘Church’, Harvey recalls that ‘during the second half of his time in the Gorbals, my sense is that Geoff had moved away from expecting anything of this nature to happen.’⁶²⁸ Aligned with this growing disillusionment on one front was the belief for Shaw ‘that if it was change that God wanted for His people in the Gorbals, then the way to bring it about was not through the Church, but through politics.’⁶²⁹ As Shaw jocularly commented, ‘it is not enough to feed the goldfish, you also have to change the water in the bowl from time to time.’⁶³⁰ This re-focusing of energies led to Shaw, being elected as Councillor for Toryglen, and in time as leader of the fledgling Strathclyde Regional Council until his death in 1978.

4.2.3.3 Factors Related to the Type of Ministry and to Working in the Gorbals

(f) The lack of engagement by local people within the Group

As in East Harlem, the Group recognised their ‘cultural intrusion’⁶³¹ –that the members of the Group were tertiary educated and mostly middle-class.⁶³² Albeit that their backgrounds flavoured many of the unsupportive contemporary responses,⁶³³ the individuals involved did not seek to mask their prior privileges, recognising that in their ‘critical solidarity’ they would never attain full ‘identification’ with the Gorbals residents. That recognition led to a reputation for honesty and credibility, and became one of their great strengths. Donald MacLeod agreed in a rare supportive passage:

In the 1960’s one of the things the Gorbals needed was a posh accent. Incarnational mission does not mean that the Christian becomes simply an ordinary, typical

⁶²⁸ Harvey, ‘Geoff Shaw’, 160.

⁶²⁹ Ibid.

⁶³⁰ Ferguson, *Geoff*, 72.

⁶³¹ In the phrase of Bill Webber, co-founder of EHPP – see Harvey, *Bridging the Gap*, 93.

⁶³² Geoff Shaw came from a wealthy Inverleith medical family, had been the Dux of Edinburgh Academy and was nurtured in faith by the patrician Rev Dr Leonard Small at Cramond Kirk. John Harvey had been educated at Kelvinside Academy, Glasgow and Fettes College, Edinburgh, had been brought up ‘in a respectable south side Church’ (Harvey, ‘Geoff Shaw’, 160), and had completed a BA at Oxford University before beginning at Trinity College in 1961.

⁶³³ The institutional Church maintained a distanced and often cynical outlook, which was clear from the outset. A view such as this from Bill Shackleton was common: ‘I knew Geoff Shaw before he was a Spartan!...As often happens with people from his background, Geoff seemed to try to make up for this by painful self-denial’ – *Keeping It Cheery: Anecdotes from a Life in Brighton*, (Glasgow: Covenanters’ Press, 2005), 79.

resident of Hutchenstown. It means that he goes in as a Spirit-filled man (and probably a resourceful, educated one) and serves the community from the inside. That is what Christ did: and that is the model to which the Gorbals Group pointed us.⁶³⁴

As in East Harlem, one detriment of 'cultural intrusion' however, was, a consequent difficulty in engaging local people in membership of the group and in worship, contributing to the lack of Christian growth. As early as 1960, the necessity of that development had been highlighted to the Group by Flossie Borgmann of the EHPP:

If the aim of the Group is to create a new community free from the institutional Church ...this demands...the participation of local people in policy making, and also to share in worship, sacraments, and Christian teaching.⁶³⁵

Shaw identified a possible solution in hindsight: 'perhaps a greater participation of local people could have been achieved by smaller units of those Group members who have come to live in Gorbals from another area and background.'⁶³⁶

(g) The sheer pressure and volume of the work on the ground

This left little time to consider forming 'Church'. As Harvey recalled:

The danger here- the danger in fact, with the whole principle of 'Christian presence' – is that we glamorise or romanticise it. It wasn't glamorous: it was bloody hard. And it wasn't romantic either.⁶³⁷

(h) Knowing how to contextually communicate the Gospel

In the absolute dedication to a fully incarnational ministry of availability, the vocabulary of Church became unlearned, distant, and increasingly irrelevant. Harvey described such a difficulty in the context of the French worker-priests:

⁶³⁴ 'Question Marks and Garbage Heaps', 25.

⁶³⁵ Flossie Borgmann, quoted in Harvey, *Bridging the Gap*, 104.

⁶³⁶ 1968 Report, 9, within the Gorbals Group Papers.

⁶³⁷ Harvey, 'Geoff Shaw', 156.

When you cut your way out into the world from the Church...it is not pride that keeps you silent; it is not even loyalty; you simply do not know what words to use.⁶³⁸

4.4.3 Summary

The Group has never, at any point, claimed to be providing an alternative to the Parish Church system, nor to be discovering the new pattern of the Church. It is not to be assumed, therefore, that the conclusions reached...[are] a blueprint for future developments elsewhere.⁶³⁹

Despite Shaw's disclaimer, the Group has had significant short and long term effects on Church and mission. The Group foreshadowed much of the 'emerging ecumenical missionary paradigm' identified in the work of David Bosch: mission as *missio Dei*; as mediating rather than proclaiming salvation; as a quest for justice; as liberation and common witness by the whole people of God; fully inculturated and contextualised.⁶⁴⁰ The Group remained untarnished as a radical, exploratory ministry, even within the social liberation of the times.

In their social work and housing action in the name of the Gospel, the Group's impact was significant on the lives of many marginalised children and adults living in chaotic slum conditions.⁶⁴¹ There was often a sense of joy and wonder within the members of the Group, as they saw their theology worked out in practice, and the positive influence which their presence had on the lives of those around them. They achieved the emulation of the ideals of the EHPP as they had sought, if not some of the practical effects.

⁶³⁸ Harvey, *Bridging the Gap*, 91.

⁶³⁹ 1968 Report, 11.

⁶⁴⁰ See David Bosch, *Transforming Mission*, Part III, 349 to 511.

⁶⁴¹ As teacher Elizabeth Livingston Mansill testifies: 'I don't believe the Group's encounter with me was noticed...However my encounter with the Group was a life-changing experience; I encountered Jesus at work.' - *Memories of 'The Gorbals Group' 1963-1966 from the Perspective of a Local Teacher*, unpublished, 2006, 2, within the Gorbals Group Papers. In a broader social sense, the contributions of Geoff Shaw and Liliias Graham to social work policy and to the provisions on Children's Panels in the Social Work (Scotland) Act 1968 are also a lasting legacy.

In the initial aim of ‘bridging the gap’ between the Church and the poor by way of indigenous and vital Churches organically growing from life on the street, their departure from that starting point was starkly highlighted in a report by David Rice, an American Baptist Pastor who spent part of 1968 on secondment with the Group from the Ecumenical Institute at Bossey. The crucial questions raised for Rice in the apparent inability of the Group to ‘be Church’ were twofold:

1. In what way can we *really* say that the Church is present when social work alone is accomplished? Does it really matter that Christian work be a conscious thing both with the doer and the receiver?
2. Do the terms ‘redemption’, ‘conversion’, and ‘salvation’ still have any meaning?⁶⁴²

The nub of the issue, as Harvey identifies, is whether *koinonia* is still an essential mark of mission, and thus of ‘Church’:

These questions the Gorbals Group, has not...answered, although it may have helped pose them, and others, more sharply to the Church.⁶⁴³

Whilst this modest admission holds true, in some ways it is an underestimation of the Group’s missiological and ecclesiastical impact. The primary legacy goes beyond models, schemes and theological strands: the inspiring, unconditional dedication to the people in God’s name. For Harvey’s tribute to his late friend Geoff Shaw, read the achievements of the ministry as a whole:

For Scotland, and for Scotland’s Church, though, Geoff surely has much to say. About integrity. About vision. About commitment. About trusting people. About seeing where God is, and going to stand alongside him, no matter what the cost.⁶⁴⁴

Beyond such fervent Christian discipleship, however, one is also drawn to agree with William Christman that ‘the example of the Gorbals Group made an indelible impression upon the Church and the people of Scotland,’⁶⁴⁵ their influence resonating in Scottish

⁶⁴² David Rice, *A Report on Fieldwork*, 1968, 9 – within the Gorbals Group Papers.

⁶⁴³ Harvey, *Bridging the Gap*, 108.

⁶⁴⁴ Harvey, ‘Geoff Shaw’, 162-163.

⁶⁴⁵ William G. Christman, ‘Being There’, *Theology in Scotland*, Vol II No 1, Spring 1995, 51.

missiology and ministry.⁶⁴⁶ At the least, the Group's work is a well of understanding for contemporary practical models of urban mission: a roadmap for group ministry, incarnational living, and within the 'emerging Church conversation'.

As for the broader missiological vision for Scotland in the present, the rousing conclusion of Harvey and Shaw's publication *Dead End Church* still holds true:

Our faith is that this is God's world- in the structures of all society, in the dark city streets, in the silent places of man's loneliness and his despair; and that there He summons His Church to reflect on His love and the coming of His kingdom. Our certainty is that Christ will cleanse the world of its sickness and of its hatred; of war and of all enmity; of injustice and of destruction- if not with the Church, then without it.⁶⁴⁷

⁶⁴⁶ Christman's view is that the Group 'had profound implications for the witness of the Church', directly inspiring incarnational ministry presence in disadvantaged areas from the Seventies onwards by such as John Millar in Castlemilk, the 'community ministry' of Archie Russell in Drumchapel, Ron Ferguson in Easterhouse and Claus Clausen in Hamilton -see Christman, 'Being There', 53-57. The leader of the Iona Community, Graeme Brown, described the Group on Shaw's death as being 'formative for the thinking of the Church in Scotland on new initiatives in mission in areas of dereliction.' - *The Coracle*, October 1978, 3.

⁶⁴⁷ Geoff Shaw & John Harvey, *A Dead End Church? : Study Guide for the Eighteenth Scottish Christian Youth Assembly*, (Falkirk: SCYA Steering Committee, 1966), 26 – a passage 'worthy of Bonhoeffer himself', according to Christman, 'Being There', 51.

4.3 THE CHURCH AS REFORMED BY THE ECUMENICAL LAITY- ROBERT MACKIE, IAN FRASER AND SCOTTISH CHURCHES HOUSE

What if the ‘para-Church’ focus of the Gorbals Group Ministry could be elsewhere directed towards the laity of all denominations of the institutions, such that their discovery of common ground might re-frame the Churches from without?

Much of the success in Scotland of transposing the developing international, ecumenical missiology of the laity into concrete action in the late Fifties was down to one of the fathers of worldwide ecumenism, Robert Mackie. Emerging from the Student Christian Movement, Mackie was the General Secretary of the World Student Christian Federation in the Forties, integral in the formation of the World Council of Churches in 1948, and latterly Associate General Secretary of the World Council of Churches until 1955. On his return to Scotland, Mackie began to play a pivotal part in Scottish Church life. Described by his friend Archie Craig as ‘the world’s best chairman’,⁶⁴⁸ Mackie applied his considerable organisational talents to three principal areas in the implementation of ecumenical mission and structural unity, which in combination represent the highpoint of both structural and representative ecumenism in Scotland.

Firstly, he became Chairman of the ‘Tell Scotland’ Executive Committee, and co-ordinated the planning for the first ‘Kirk Week’ for the laity at Aberdeen in August 1957, modelled on the German lay *Kirchentag*, of which Mackie had direct personal experience. The idea of ‘Kirk Week’ within the ‘Tell Scotland’ Movement was a reaction against the seeming distance with the laity created by the Billy Graham Crusade. ‘Kirk Weeks’ were a recognition that theology had become the preserve only of the academic; that the whole membership must recognise its vocation, involving education and development for both ministers and lay members; and that ‘the priesthood of all believers’ had been ‘subverted

⁶⁴⁸ Nansie Blackie, *In Love and Laughter: A Portrait of Robert Mackie*, (Edinburgh: Saint Andrew Press, 1995), 141.

by the ecclesiastically convenient alternative of the clericalising of further selected lay groups-such as the eldership in the Church of Scotland.’⁶⁴⁹

In organising the first Kirk Week, Mackie experienced the same issue which stifled development of clear thinking on the role of the laity at the World Council of Churches, being the absence of lay representation in the decision-making process. He wrote to his son that the Kirk Week Executive was made up of ‘busy ministers’, but that ‘it ought to be a layman’s committee’, lamenting that ‘I am fighting for lay leadership as against clerical push...I told the Synod that Presbyterianism seemed to have frozen its laity in an ecclesiastical system.’⁶⁵⁰

Despite these misgivings, the Kirk Week in Aberdeen in August 1957 was deemed a success, attended by over a thousand delegates, and providing a boost to the enthusiasm for and direction of ‘Tell Scotland’, albeit temporary. It led to the re-formation of ‘Tell Scotland’ under four ‘Commissions’, one being for ‘The Laity’ under Melville Dinwiddie of the BBC.⁶⁵¹ The 1957 event was followed by further Kirk Weeks in Ayr and Perth.

Secondly, in an attempt to unite structural re-integration with the local, Mackie acted in its challenging early years as Chairman of the Committee overseeing the ‘area of ecumenical experiment’ in the new town of Livingston, West Lothian. January 1966 saw the induction of James Maitland as the Church of Scotland minister, along with the institution of an Episcopal priest, together for the first time in Scottish history. As Maitland later reflected, ‘Something unmistakably ecumenical, something that ordinary people could see and test for themselves, had been brought into being at the grassroots of urban life in Scotland.’⁶⁵²

Thirdly, and most importantly for present purposes, Mackie was integral in the formation of Scottish Churches House, Dunblane, in its initial purposes: as a dynamic attempt to not

⁶⁴⁹ Ibid, 131-132.

⁶⁵⁰ Quoted in Blackie, *In Love and Laughter*, 132.

⁶⁵¹ See Melville Dinwiddie, *The Layman at Work*, (Glasgow: Tell Scotland Movement, 1960), 7.

⁶⁵² James Maitland, *New Beginnings, Breaking through to Unity: Early Years in Livingston’s Ecumenical Parish*, (Edinburgh; Saint Andrew Press, 1988), 12.

only bring more closely together those involved in seeking the integration of existing Church structures, but to also to provide the forum for the investigation and resolution of social and cultural issues by groups across society, and for the Church laity of all denominations to meet together in order to draw towards a common understanding of theology and the world. The hope was that in doing so the ordinary people might not only identify potential solutions to social problems, but also to re-imagine the nature of their church dominations in the future, so that the Church might more truly meet the needs and concerns of the people within them.

On his return to Scotland, Mackie had become friendly with the parish minister at Rosyth, Fife, Ian Fraser, and his wife, Margaret. Mackie established the common ground between seven dominations for the formation of Scottish Churches House, identified the ruined row of houses in Dunblane which might serve the project, raised much of the initial funding and persuaded Ian Fraser to become the first Warden.⁶⁵³

On graduating BD with distinction from New College in 1942, Ian Fraser refused an invitation from Professor John Baillie to apply to join the teaching staff, in order to work for two years as a prototype worker-priest in the Tullis Russell paper mill in Markinch, Fife, owned by Sir David Russell, prominent friend and supporter of George MacLeod and the Iona Community.

Following a period as Scottish Secretary of the SCM, Fraser was called to parish ministry in Rosyth, Fife, then dominated by the Naval Dockyard, where he served from 1948 to 1960. As head of the Commission for 'The Community' of 'Tell Scotland', he wrote of his experiences in Rosyth in *Bible, Congregation and Community* in 1959.⁶⁵⁴ Doug Gay assesses the book as:

‘...a remarkable account of a local attempt to embody the theological vision of the Baillie Commission for the post-war Church of Scotland, but in its political

⁶⁵³ Blackie, *In Love and Laughter*, 137.

⁶⁵⁴ On Fraser's ministry in Rosyth, see also Chapter 4 of the biographical book by Ian Cranston, *I've Seen Worse: Glimpses of Ian Fraser*, (Larbert: Ian Cranston, 2011).

radicalism and its practical commitment to the empowerment of lay people it goes some way beyond that...It offers an inclusive vision of Christian practice which defies evangelical, ecumenical and liberal labels.’⁶⁵⁵

Fraser’s achievement in the parish was to make the Gospel come alive for the ordinary members of the Church, and for that to occur through a process by which the lay members of the Church were empowered to achieve for themselves the biblical insights necessary to interpret the relationship of the Gospel to the everyday, and to utilise Scripture and their faith as a living guide to their future path.

As Fraser wrote in 2011 in an introduction to a re-print of the book, ‘the whole Church became Bible-based. That gave members a fresh appreciation of what Church and ministry should be, and led them to live in the light of that discovery. I would call this basic factor ‘Bible resourcing’ rather than Bible study.’⁶⁵⁶ Thus he could write in 1959: ‘It has been one of the highlights of my life to hear people speak together about the real circumstances with which they daily have to contend, out of their rooting in the Bible.’⁶⁵⁷

Over a dozen years, Fraser had brought the elders to a point where they could identify ‘the relevance of biblical insights to developments in the dockyard’, and indeed the whole congregation to ‘the relevance of the scriptures to what they had to work through in the different pressures and opportunities life presented.’⁶⁵⁸

He had done so by a process of integrating scripture to the ‘business’ of the Church courts, by allowing the lives and Biblical insights of ordinary members to play a role in liturgy in ‘participative worship’ whereby ‘the real pressures of life’ are ‘continually woven into the fabric’, with the minister ‘instructed by the congregation out of their immersion in the

⁶⁵⁵ Douglas C. Gay, *A Practical Theology of Church and World: Ecclesiology and Social Vision in 20th Century Scotland*, (unpublished PhD thesis, University of Edinburgh, 2006), 179.

⁶⁵⁶ Ian M. Fraser, *Bible, Congregation and Community*, (London: SCM Press Ltd, 1959, reprinted by Ian Fraser, Ferndale, 2011), 9.

⁶⁵⁷ *Ibid*, 36.

⁶⁵⁸ *Ibid*, 10.

world;⁶⁵⁹ and above all to recognise his role in relationship with the laity as one of encourager and inspirer:

The gifts given by the Spirit need to be identified, matured and effectively deployed. That is the first responsibility of those of us who are ordained. Our ministry is auxiliary to the main ministry of the Church. It exists to bring the ministry of God's people into play, nourishing it, equipping it.⁶⁶⁰

In all of his work in Rosyth and following, Fraser was clear that mission was an integrated work of 'proclamation' both in word and deed, by the whole people of God immersed in the life of the world. His manifesto for the Church expressed in 1959 still bears well in the present era:

The business of the Church in the world is to proclaim him. Proclamation is not simply a work of the ordained ministry, nor is it simply a matter of words... Proclamation belongs to the ministry of the whole Church. Christ is made known by words wherever members willingly combat untruth, and interpret their faith as need requires and opportunity offers. He is made known wherever the Christ-like deed confirms words and clothes them with reality. These two, words and deeds, go together, form a single testimony. He is made known where there is self-sacrificial love. Proclamation is a total activity, the whole membership making Christ known at every point in its common life— when it is conscious of making him known and when it is not, when it is speaking and when it is silent. Wherever members of the Church are in the world, there is the place of witness.

Contextualisation was essential for Fraser to the 'proclamation' of the whole people of God:

For the proclamation to be made, the language and lessons of the world must be learned. The Church must take serious account of the world's life. The context which disciplines it is as inescapably given as the revelation which masters it. It has no language with which to speak but that which is common currency in the world. It must be immersed in the traffic of men...⁶⁶¹

The process of integrating 'the language and lessons of the world' with the Gospel and the Churches was central to the vision for Scottish Churches House. Writing on the eve of

⁶⁵⁹ Ibid, 20-21.

⁶⁶⁰ Ibid, 12.

⁶⁶¹ Ibid, 60.

his departure as Warden in 1969, Fraser set out its purpose and achievements since its inception in 1960:

Nine denominations have set up a place belonging to them all, a meeting-point which is common ground...Many thousands have come here to make exploration into new reaches of Christian life and worship...they have been looking for God doing a new thing in this new age...“Dunblane” stands for them something more than an earnest endeavour towards co-operation between Christians. It represents an act of faith that God has something urgent to give us to do when we are willing to learn it together – a new shape for His Church.⁶⁶²

Its goal therefore was not simply a place for friendly discussion, but a forum for an earnest attempt between ordinary lay members of denominations as well as their leaders to more fully address the problems of the world with the Gospel, and to provide a new direction for the structures of the Churches themselves. In implementation of that goal, as one of three types of ‘consultation’ which the House hosted constantly throughout the Sixties, as Gay notes, ‘a series of lay consultations were instituted under the heading ‘Sharing the Gospel’. These meetings held two or three times a year aimed to educate and empower lay people to take part in ecumenical debates and consultations about the order and mission of the Church, both in Scotland and globally.’⁶⁶³

For Fraser, this recognition of the primacy of the laity in all consideration of mission was essential for the development of a theology of the laity, and of the content of direct, local action. It would point the way ahead for the Church, both for unity between denominations, and for mission itself:

Much too little attention is paid to the significance of the fellowship of Christians in localities...Much more emphasis needs to be placed on the coming together of Christians at the grass roots, as a sign and promise of the coming great Church. This coming together could also offer a testing-bed for forms of the Church...⁶⁶⁴

⁶⁶² Ian M. Fraser, *Scottish Churches' House, Dunblane*, (Perth: George Outram & Company Ltd, 1969), 1. Gay notes that Scottish Churches House was consciously styled on the German Evangelical Academies referred to in Chapter 3.1.6 – ‘A Practical Theology...’, 147, 151.

⁶⁶³ Gay, ‘A Practical Theology...’, 174.

⁶⁶⁴ *Let's Get Moving: A Plea for Church Revolution in Scotland*, (Edinburgh: The Scottish Churches' Council, 1969), 33-34.

There is now, regrettably, no obvious forum in Scotland like Scottish Churches House for the formation of a 'declericalised lay theology' which tempers and transforms our institutional decision-making. The venues that opened for that purpose, for the most part in the period 1945 to 1960, to allow the meeting, discussion and training of lay people in mission and unity were allowed to be run down and have been closed. St Ninian's, Crieff founded by D.P. Thomson in 1958 for the training of lay people in mission and evangelism was closed by the General Assembly in 2001; Community House of the Iona Community in Clyde Street, Glasgow, has also gone, opened as a gathering point in the city and place of welcome and engagement with ordinary people in life and theology, and a venue for diverse social groups from Alcoholics Anonymous to the striking UCS shipbuilders led by Jimmy Reid; the Scottish Churches Open College closed in 2003; Scottish Churches House was closed in January 2012 and is now a hotel.

The widespread closure by the Scottish Churches of the avenues for the laity in which to find voices to contribute to the major issues of mission and unity, and the confidence to carry them out, is destructive of the vitality and future vibrancy of the Churches themselves. As former Warden Alistair Hulbert comments in relation to Scottish Churches House, the Churches are '...symbolically closing down a channel through which living water has flowed, by which the laity has irrigated the Church with its imagination and creativity.'⁶⁶⁵

With their dissipation and closure, the arm of the institution, and the authority of the clergy in theological and missiological argument, has become re-asserted. The stifling of the oxygen of a wider debate has diminished the possibility of, and any real interest in, closer co-operation and communion, whilst Tom Allan's 'greatest lesson' that effective mission flows only from co-operative unity, and *vice versa*, has proved impossible to teach.

Meanwhile, there has been a gradual dissipation of the voice of ecumenism at grass roots level to a whisper. Ian Fraser wrote in 1969, 'Livingston should not simply be a beacon,

⁶⁶⁵ Alistair Hulbert, *The Hint Half Guessed: Mission, Ecumenism and Other Holy Things* (J.R. Reid, 2008), 181.

but a torch thrust into ready undergrowth to start a forest fire.’⁶⁶⁶ Instead the Livingston Ecumenical Parish, as Sheilagh Kesting, the Head of Ecumenical Relations in the Church of Scotland since 1993, comments, ‘...is a swear-word in some quarters of the Church of Scotland-the experiment that failed. It is held up as a warning to others who might want to follow suit.’⁶⁶⁷

Using Alistair Hulbert’s distinction, ‘representative ecumenism’, between those at levels of power and influence within the Scottish Churches, persists in a fashion. However, ‘participative ecumenism’, the engagement of local people in dialogue, action and theology has waned. Hulbert’s view is regretful of the decline and the resulting stasis, describing:

...a lamentable loss of ecumenical vision amongst Church people... Nowadays, the majority of Church members have been shaped either in a conservative evangelical setting where world mission, ecumenism and visible unity are not seen to be important, or in a merely denominational setting which gives no opportunity to form deep and trusting friendships outside it.⁶⁶⁸

Despite the functioning of Action of Churches Together in Scotland to at least maintain some semblance of cross-denominational communication at the local level, the type of exchange between lay people at the grassroots level that Ian Fraser envisaged for the benefit of the Churches, or that formed the *raison d’être* of Scottish Churches House, is mostly gone. Sheilagh Kesting agrees, and issues a stark confession that those within the hierarchy have thus failed:

There does not appear to be much of a genuine exchange, a getting to know one another at a deeper level. It is evident that there is a huge amount of ignorance both about other denominations and not infrequently about one’s own. Those of us who are engaged in enabling the development of ecumenical relationships have singularly failed to communicate, far less kindle interest in what can happen. People are unaware of the extent of co-operation and commitment that is possible.

⁶⁶⁶ Ian M. Fraser, *Let’s Get Moving: A Plea for Church Revolution in Scotland*, (Edinburgh: The Scottish Churches’ Council, 1969), 33-34.

⁶⁶⁷ Sheilagh Kesting, ‘Being Ecumenical in Scotland Today’, *Theology in Scotland*, Vol XIII No 2, Autumn 2006, 15.

⁶⁶⁸ Hulbert, *The Hint Half Guessed*, 181.

Ministers hide behind their congregations – ‘they wouldn’t like it’ – and won’t risk a journey together.’⁶⁶⁹

4.4 CONCLUSIONS

It is hard to escape the conclusion that lay people have been marginalised by the Churches by accident or design, either to retain control of theological and ecclesiological direction, or as an unfortunate corollary of the process of cost-cutting of the ‘non-essential’ elements of the Churches in times of institutional decline. What has certainly departed is the concentration on the importance of their role in mission and unity, and thus any impetus towards their engagement and training for the tasks those challenges might involve. They are no longer venerated as they were in the fifteen years after World War II: as the powerhouse that would revolutionise the Church internally, that would break out to fully communicate the Gospel in every breath of life, and would provide the impetus and means of unity across the denominations, whether organic or conciliary. It was an attempted revolution in the democratisation of the Churches, but it has run its course.

Understandably in the present stasis, missiological excitement is centred not on how the lay people of the Church can change the institution and society, but on avoiding the institution altogether, and by implication and effect, those marooned with it. It is focused upon ‘emerging Church’ or ‘Fresh Expressions’, whose very ethos excludes institutionalisation. Mission is not broadly occurring within the institutions, and if it is to happen from now on, it is expected to ‘emerge’ on its own terms, beyond the barricades, away from the foot soldiers. The challenge is to seek to integrate the missiological insights of ‘Fresh Expressions’ within the outlook of the institutions, to reform their very essence, and the role of the laity within them, as Fraser had envisaged.

There remains a huge pool of resource in the laity within the mainstream denominations. That resource was identified in the period of 1945 to 1970 when all four models of contextual mission sought to bring the life and faith of ordinary people to the fore,

⁶⁶⁹ Kesting, ‘Being Ecumenical’, 14-15.

identified as the future of mission and unity. Has their day passed? Is there any hope now for the utility of the ordinary people who still invest large proportions of their time, finance and faith in the furtherance of the institution? What of them if the Church's energies are to be expended in cost-cutting rationalisation, or in the encouragement of alternative communities at the edges?

Is the call to 'mission' of some description merely an attempt to mask the sting of cost-cutting exercises? Is it realistic at all, when the laity would need to be inspired to action, and have been so distanced over the past half century from ideas of what mission might constitute? When everything is rejected by one side or another, nothing can be done concertedly in the name of mission, and inaction results. Indeed, the ordinary Church member would be hard pressed to come to a working definition of mission and what it means practically in his/her parish. There remains a common misconception that the purpose of 'mission' is to increase the numbers in the parish Church, and that the means of 'mission' are grand-scale events; very much a 'Call to Church' concept close to the mission of the Thirties, married to the Christendom ideal, and as if developments in *missio Dei* theology had never happened. Not many talk about mission, or are being trained in it; and ordinary people are not being empowered to exercise it.

So what needs to be recaptured? It is a crucial re-alignment of trust, confidence and investment of time, energy and money in the lives, theology, training and witness of ordinary Church members. It is time to seek to re-ignite in their Christian lives a sense of the relevance for them and the Church of mission and unity from the ground upwards.

From the EHPP, the Church as institution must seek to re-align its core understanding towards the contextual flows of the world in its immediate midst; of adapting structure and hierarchy so that its form might be more greatly defined by life outside.

From the Gorbals Group Ministry, there is a sense of the Church as institution letting go of all structures which might hinder the process of lay encounter and the formation of Christian community, allowing contextualised forms of 'Church' to develop and grow without pre-determined models being imposed, or 'results' being anticipated.

Ian Fraser and Scottish Churches House point towards a ‘bible resourcing’ of the laity to allow their fuller ‘proclamation’, and the re-opening of avenues by which their common ground might ‘irrigate’ the Churches.

However, to meaningfully transpose the missiology of 1945 to 1970 to the present will require not only a leap in time, but also a re-configuration through a filter of present day global missiological thinking, so that aspects definitely ‘of their time’ might remain there.

The following Chapter will thus seek to examine in global missiological terms the pertinence for the present of a focus upon the Church laity in mission, and the centrality of the concept of ‘prophetic dialogue’ in the exercise of a ‘cross-cultural translation’. That examination will provide a platform by which the missiology considered in Chapters 2 to 4 can be streamlined and refreshed, so that it bears fruit in principles that resonate in the present era, as are set out in the Conclusions of Chapter 6.

CHAPTER 5 – PRESENT DAY GLOBAL MISSIOLOGY

If only we could get our lay folk working as Spirit-filled ministers of the Gospel, how many of our problems would be solved!⁶⁷⁰ *Stephen Neill, Anglican Ecumenist, 1952*

Introduction

Before final conclusions are drawn on the work of the Scottish missiologists of the immediate post-war period, this Chapter will seek to identify the present-day missiological framework by which we might analyse and assess their work, so that the appropriate pathways in the current landscape might become more apparent, as derivations and principles are sought to be translated from their time to our own.

Therefore, taking the premise that the journey through the missiology of Tom Allan and his Scottish contemporaries leads us towards the primacy of the laity in mission, with Gospel and Church contextualised in everyday experience, what global missiological foundations can be laid to more properly focus such assertions, and transpose them from that era to the present?

This chapter shall consider four areas whereby the analysis and practical outcomes identified within the three preceding chapters can be placed in present missiological context, and bolstered through a deeper consideration of the potential role of the laity within it, as follows:

- 5.1 ‘The *Missio Dei*’ - Where is the Laity’s Place in the Mission of God?
- 5.2 ‘Glocalisation’, Global and Local - Why is Local Mission Pertinent Now in the Social Circumstances of the West?
- 5.3 ‘Cross-Cultural Translation’ and ‘Interculturation’ - How Do the Laity Recognise the Crossing of Boundaries, and What Does This Mean for Theology and Mission?; and

⁶⁷⁰ Stephen Neill, *On the Ministry*, (London: SCM Press Ltd, 1952), 111.

5.4 'Prophetic Dialogue' - Under What Definition and Foundation of Mission Should the Laity Act?

5.1 THE *MISSIO DEI* - WHERE IS THE LAITY'S PLACE IN THE MISSION OF GOD?

It is not the Church of God that has a mission in the world, but the God of mission that has a Church in the world.⁶⁷¹

Mission is not an agenda item - it is the agenda.⁶⁷²

Where is the point of connection that renders the Church laity as central in Christian mission, such that the laity might come to appreciate the nature of their calling?

The concept of the *missio Dei*, that mission is 'God's activity, which embraces both the Church and world',⁶⁷³ is a fundamental reconsideration of the presence of God in the nexus of mission with ecclesiology, and thus of the Church's relationship to the world outwith its confines. As mission emanates from God, there is a realisation that the role of the Church is in recognition of the presence of the Triune God in the world, as James Torrance states:

The mission of the Church is the gift of participating through the Holy Spirit in the Son's mission from the Father to the world.⁶⁷⁴

In such participation, there is thus a recognition of a 'relational perception of God - a God in whom interpersonal love is active', with mission as a fundamental constituent of the Triune God's existence and purpose: 'the mission of God flows directly from the nature

⁶⁷¹ Tim Dearborn, 'Beyond Duty: A Passion for Christ, a Heart for Mission', (MARC, 1998), quoted in Church of England, *Mission-Shaped Church: Church Planting and Fresh Expressions of Church in a Changing Context*, (London, Church House Publishing, 2004), 5.

⁶⁷² Stuart Murray, *Church after Christendom: Church and Mission in a Strange New World*, (Milton Keynes: Paternoster Press, 2004), 137.

⁶⁷³ Jürgen Moltmann, *The Church in the Power of the Spirit*, (New York: Harbour Row, 1977), 64.

⁶⁷⁴ James Torrance, *Worship, Community and the Triune God of Grace*, (Milton Keynes: Paternoster Press, 1996), ix.

of who God is....God's intention for the world is that in every respect it should show forth the way He is - love, community, equality, diversity, mercy, compassion and justice.'⁶⁷⁵

Secular society is then no longer viewed as a hostile enemy to be overcome in battle, with those outside the Church as prospects to be won. The theology of Church as conqueror of the world becomes Church in solidarity with the world. *Missio Dei* involves the abandonment of the geographical and territorial outlook on mission, and the adoption of domestic and pan-national mission based on faith, love and reconciliation.

The ready assumption that *missio Dei* is the most apt expression of a mature ecclesiology is, however, subject to the danger that it can become 'more of a slogan than a defining phrase.'⁶⁷⁶ The difficulty for the concept of *missio Dei* as a tool for missiological analysis, as John Flett has pointed out, is that '*missio Dei* is a trope. It satisfies an instinct that missionary witness properly belongs to the life of the Church without offering any concrete definition of that act.' Thus, reducing all to the concept of 'sending', the 'vacuity emerges', creating a 'Trinitarian illusion behind which all manner of non-Trinitarian mediations operate with sanctioned impunity.'⁶⁷⁷

Admitting then with caution that all theological extremes can potentially be accommodated within any reading of the *missio Dei*, where then does this locate the laity of the Church in their focus towards mission? It strikes at the very heart of their place within the whole ecclesial construct, of the nature of *koinonia*, as 'to clarify the nature of mission is to answer the question, what is the Church for?'⁶⁷⁸ The New Testament inextricably links the Church to mission as its 'raison d'être...thus at one stroke sharply focusing its purpose while subsuming other functions under mission.'⁶⁷⁹ If Church, mission and world are inseparable, then involvement of the laity of the Church in the mission of God in the world must also be fundamental. Mission becomes a founding core

⁶⁷⁵ J. Andrew Kirk, *What is Mission: Theological Explorations*, (London: Darton, Longman & Todd Ltd, 1999), 28.

⁶⁷⁶ Ibid, 25.

⁶⁷⁷ John Flett, *The Witness of God: The Trinity, Missio Dei, Karl Barth and the Nature of Christian Community*, (Grand Rapids: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 2010), 8-10.

⁶⁷⁸ Kirk, *What is Mission*, 31.

⁶⁷⁹ Wilbert R. Shenk, 'The Mission Dynamic', Chapter 7 of *Mission in Bold Humility: David Bosch's Work Considered*, William Saayman & Klippies Kritzinger, (eds), (Maryknoll, New York : Orbis Books, 1996), 83.

of the Church, and thus its laity, without which their Church cannot be identified as an entity, or as a keeper of an honest and true faith. The Church exists by the community of those that have been transformed by mission, and who in turn seek to transform.

Therefore, in Bosch's words, 'there is Church because there is mission, not vice versa.'⁶⁸⁰ Or as the Church of England's *Mission Shaped Church* report sets out: '[it] is therefore of the essence (the DNA) of the Church to be a missionary community...this sets the standard by which the Church tests all its activity.'⁶⁸¹ Indeed, if the Church is subsumed within God's mission, it is wholly subject to God's sending, and 'has no liberty, therefore, to invent its own agenda.'⁶⁸²

In the attempted unfolding of a coherent *missio Dei* theology, despite its inherent uncertainties, there has nevertheless been an inherent benefit in that 'a theocentric focus on mission as the *missio Dei* replaced the former Church-centric focus'⁶⁸³ that had prevailed for centuries. There is a freedom in the realisation that individual motivations for mission are, as Karl Barth expressed it, 'mere representations of a motive which one can neither describe or assume, because it is identical with the current will and order of one person, namely the divine person, the Lord of the Church.'⁶⁸⁴ Michael Amaldoss concurs, writing that 'To contemplate the Trinity, our mission in the world is a freeing experience, so that we can carry on our own mission without aggression and anxiety, conscious that we are making a real contribution to the realization of God's plan for the world. We learn to be sensitive to what God is doing in the world and to coordinate our own mission with God's mission.'⁶⁸⁵

The laity are thus at once struck by the realisation that their Church is both formed by mission and compelled in its exercise, but blessed also with the freedom to do so as the Spirit leads.

⁶⁸⁰ David Bosch, *Transforming Mission: Paradigm Shifts in Theology of Mission*, (New York: Orbis, 1991), 390.

⁶⁸¹ *Mission-Shaped Church*, 85.

⁶⁸² Kirk, *What is Mission*, 31.

⁶⁸³ Norman Thomas (ed.), *Readings in World Mission*, (Maryknoll, New York: Orbis Books, 1995), 103.

⁶⁸⁴ Karl Barth, 'Theologische Fragen und Antworten', as quoted in Thomas (ed.), *Readings in World Mission*, 104.

⁶⁸⁵ 'The Trinity in Mission,' in Frans Wijsen and Peter Nissen, eds., *'Mission is a Must': Intercultural Theology and the Mission of the Church* (Amsterdam: Rodopi, 2002), 99-106, 106.

The Church is, therefore, in Jürgen Moltmann's words, 'one element in the power of the Spirit and has no need to maintain its special power and its special charges with absolute and self-destructive claims', nor any need 'to look sideways in suspicion or jealousy at the saving efficacies of the Spirit outside the Church; instead it can recognise that the Spirit is greater than the Church and that God's purpose of salvation reaches beyond the Church.'⁶⁸⁶

How then can *missio Dei* be more fully realised in the relationship of the Church to the Kingdom of God and the world? The secure judgment is, in my opinion, the middle ground that the Church can be viewed as 'the only self-conscious agent of the kingdom',⁶⁸⁷ whilst not being equated with the realisation of that Kingdom. Therefore, whilst God's mission is carried out both within and outwith the Church, it is advanced to a greater extent by the Christian sphere in the knowledge and exercise of a missionary purpose, as well as being exercised and emphasised in the secular world.

The Church's role is thus succinctly summarised by Andrew Kirk as follows:

In its preaching and teaching, the Church is an advocate of the kingdom; in its worshipping life it is an emissary of the kingdom; in its work for reconciliation, peace and justice it is an instrument of the kingdom.⁶⁸⁸

Churches and laity therefore 'need a missional ethos, expressed in their core values and nurtured in their corporate life', by the development 'at translocal level of a shift from institution to movement.'⁶⁸⁹

The future depends on the realisation of the *missio Dei* within the laity whereby 'the good news of God's love [can be] incarnated in the witness of a community, for the sake of the world.'⁶⁹⁰ The daunting challenge is to live out this truth in the practice of everyday life as the expression of the Trinity, otherwise we risk endangering the faithful expression of the defining construction of our existence and belief, in other words recognising that:

⁶⁸⁶ Moltmann, *The Church in the Power of the Spirit*, 64-65.

⁶⁸⁷ Kirk, *What is Mission*, 35.

⁶⁸⁸ *Ibid.*, 36.

⁶⁸⁹ Murray, *Church after Christendom*, 137, 142.

⁶⁹⁰ Bosch, *Transforming Mission*, 519.

Mission is the fundamental reality of our Christian life. We are Christians because we have been called by God to work with him in the fulfilment of his purposes for humanity as a whole. Our life in this world is life in mission. Life has a purpose only to the extent that it has a missionary dimension.⁶⁹¹

The practical effect of the purification process of *missio Dei* on the everyday life of the laity is, therefore, to produce four regenerative consequences which the laity are engaged to initiate: (a) as the Church is not the centre but a means of mission the laity must work in the Church to 'adapt its forms and structures to God's mission today'; (b) they must 'take with radical seriousness what is happening in the world. . .listen to the world's agenda'; (c) they must realise 'the whole world is the mission field'; and (d) they must be 'renewed to be the sign of the new humanity'.⁶⁹²

In doing so, there is an inevitable deflection of the concentration of energy away from the plans of Church people for the salvation of the unchurched, or as Bosch amusingly described a movement away from such a one-dimensional approach, mission as '...more than calling individuals into the Church as a waiting room for the hereafter.'⁶⁹³ The movement is away from the plans of the laity of the Church for the people outwith, towards a demonstration of the plans of God for all in the visible implementation of His love. As Bosch explains:

The primary purpose of the *missiones ecclesiae* can therefore not simply be the planting of Churches or the saving of souls; rather, it has to be service to the *missio Dei* representing God in and over against the world, pointing to God... in its mission, the Church witnesses to the fullness of the promise of God's reign and participates in the ongoing struggle between that reign and the powers of darkness and evil.⁶⁹⁴

Mission by the laity of the Church through the *missio Dei* must divert from inward strategies of re-organisation: a trench-building mentality aimed at self-preservation which is in denial of its true purpose as called by Christ. Its focus instead should be living and

⁶⁹¹ Emilio Castro, 'Liberation, Development and Evangelism: Must We Choose Mission?', *Occasional Bulletin for Missionary Research* (July 1978), 87, as quoted by Kirk, *What is Mission*, 31.

⁶⁹² Philip Potter, *Life in All Its Fullness*, (Geneva: WCC, 1981), quoted in Thomas (ed.), *Readings in World Mission*, 114-115.

⁶⁹³ Bosch, *Transforming Mission*, 377.

⁶⁹⁴ *Ibid*, 391.

sharing the Gospel in engagement and action, serving people contextually in their social, economic and pastoral realities.

However, if it is necessary for *the Church* to focus on its foundational role in God's mission in the world, why does that necessarily translate to the responsibility of its rank and file?

5.2 GLOCALISATION, GLOBAL AND LOCAL - WHY IS LOCAL MISSION PERTINENT NOW IN THE SOCIAL CIRCUMSTANCES OF THE WEST?

Why concentrate on *the laity* of the local Church in engagement with the world? Why not mobilise the clergy to reproduce large-scale national mission such as the 'Tell Scotland' campaign; or to further common unity and agreement on the nature and theology of mission, to then be implemented worldwide in international organisations such as the World Council of Churches or the Lausanne Movement?

The Protestant ecumenical vision of the twentieth century is slowly dying. The hope of consensus for high-level structural unity amongst denominations, or mutual dedication to a shared global conception of what might constitute 'justice, peace and the integrity of creation', is married to ideals whose precepts are fast eroding. The focus, instead, must now be upon the local, where the laity of the Church have the prime advantage in the exercise of their faith.

The inculturation of Gospel and Church within Western civilisation has developed over many centuries. In the period of early Christianization, in the words of Antonie Wessels, 'it took on the colour of its environment', and thus 'related to existing holy places, times, persons and stories.'⁶⁹⁵ There developed a solidity over more recent centuries of the marriage bond of Christendom and rational modernity, in their concurrent global spread

⁶⁹⁵ Antonie Wessels, 'The Inculturation of Christianity in Europe', in Simon Barrow & Graeme Smith eds, *Christian Mission in Western Society: Precedents, Perspectives, Prospects*, (London: CTBI Publications, 2001), 31-49, 36. Wessels thus suggests that the 'de-mythologising' project of Rudolf Bultmann and others was suicidal.

throughout Western empires. The dilemma now is that in the West ‘the two projects are beginning to run out of power.’⁶⁹⁶

In a seminal article of diagnosis and prognosis from 2001, the Dutch missiologist Bert Hoedemaker guides the direction of Christian mission in the displacement and fragmentation of culture that marks ‘late modernity’ in Western Europe.

Hoedemaker begins by identifying the complicity of ‘Christianization’ in Western Europe with the processes of ‘modernization’: through (a) the desire to conquer complexity with universal rationality; (b) the creation of global stability by applying universal concepts as normative supra-culturally, such as unified models of Christianity or human rights, in contrast to a local inculturation process; and (c) in the close connection between a Kantian elevation of the autonomy of the individual and the evangelical process of personal conversion, to be initiated through persuasive, rational discourse.⁶⁹⁷

In the need to apply standard universal norms, the ‘common motivation’ of the ‘syntheses’ of Christianization and modernization was ‘the containment, the taming of local, plural religion in an overarching cultural system’, in order to define religion ‘from the point of view of some ‘centre’.’⁶⁹⁸

Inevitably, the process assumed a power ethic, and was intrinsically bound to imperial and diplomatic strength, because ‘it draws the world into the Western historical narrative,’⁶⁹⁹ implying that the imposition of a strain of Christianity inculturated in Western Europe, and founded upon its social structures, is the will of a universal God and should be imposed elsewhere.

The boon for Christianity in Western Europe in its relationship with the process of modernisation has been, as Hoedemaker puts it, ‘a certain freedom of development and

⁶⁹⁶ Bert Hoedemaker, ‘Mission Beyond Modernity: A Global Perspective’, in Simon Barrow & Graeme Smith eds, *Christian Mission in Western Society: Precedents, Perspectives, Prospects*, (London: CTBI Publications, 2001), 212-233, 212. See also the in-depth consideration of issues of the global and the local in late modernity/postmodernity by Robert J. Schreiter in *Constructing Local Theologies*, (Maryknoll, New York: Orbis Books, 1985) and *The New Catholicity: Theology between the Global and the Local*, (Maryknoll, New York: Orbis Books, 1998).

⁶⁹⁷ Hoedemaker, ‘Mission Beyond Modernity’, 213.

⁶⁹⁸ Ibid, 215.

⁶⁹⁹ Ibid, 213.

self-assertion, and in some cases the semblance of public significance.’⁷⁰⁰ In few countries has this been more marked than with the Church of Scotland. In modernity, the Church of Scotland was unfettered to express its will in civic society; its doctrinal opinion in matters of private morality took centre stage in politics and education; its views were widely disseminated through the media; and its leaders were accepted as cohorts in the power élite which ran the country. No-one told the Church of Scotland what to do, but its voice was heard and respected when it chose to tell others.

The problem now is adroitly summarised by Hoedemaker, as rationality has turned against religion in the late modern setting (my emphasis):

The synthesis...is constituted on the basis of a rationality that suspects religion and seeks to contain it. In other words, *in so far as religion supports and confirms the modern synthesis, it is suicidal.*⁷⁰¹

The backlash of rationality against religion is manifested in two principal directions:

...first in the sense of emancipation, of liberation from dogma and superstition considered to be a hindrance to the development of autonomous reason, then in the sense of a systematic functionalism that prides itself on its ability to organize life without reference to the transcendent.⁷⁰²

A rebellion against the ‘meta-narrative’ and the re-assertion of personal autonomy in decision-making thus undermines the three major streams of twentieth century global ecumenism: firstly, that there might be one message (Christocentric ecumenical mission of the Fifties); secondly, one universal social ethic over-riding different cultural viewpoints (ecumenical mission for justice and peace of the Sixties); or, thirdly, that visible structural unity could still be possible in global pluralism (ecumenical structural aspirations for one Church).

If such meta-narratives are increasingly unworkable, this may mean ‘the surfacing of types of religion that disregard the limits placed on them by modernity.’⁷⁰³ Therefore, whilst the

⁷⁰⁰ Ibid, 219.

⁷⁰¹ Ibid, 219.

⁷⁰² Ibid, 214.

⁷⁰³ Ibid, 222-223.

future may be religion of the ‘remainders, the loose ends and the reservoirs’,⁷⁰⁴ it is religion which might survive the tensions of the *global* only by maintaining its distinctive, *local*, inculturated identity.

What, however, *is* the *local*? It is no longer simply constructs such as a geographical ‘parish’ or social institutions. The task of closely defining the ‘culture’ of a prevailing geographical area or demographic group in Western Europe has become nigh impossible with the disparity and displacement of inter-relationships amongst people who otherwise live in close proximity. This has been the ironic counter-force of instant global communication, as well as the result of world migration and fluidity of employment which have mixed urban society as never before. Whilst one may still feel some sense of connection in community and corporate responsibility with those living in the immediate vicinity, the Church in Scotland no longer serves as the social glue which provides a focus of community-building, and nor, indeed, do social clubs, political parties or trade unions. An individual is as likely to form a common bond with those who share a passion worldwide for a form of online gaming, a musical genre, or a sexual preference. The result is, in Dale Irvin’s words, that ‘life on the street and the culture of streets take on intensely new configurations of inter- and cross-cultural experience and meaning.’⁷⁰⁵

Missiologial reflections on ‘inculturation’ and ‘cross-cultural translation’ once would have been the preserve of large North American missionary societies, or pan-global denomination such as the Roman Catholic Church, in considering territorial journeys outwards from a Westernised cultural base to Africa or Asia. The same reflections are now directly applicable to the everyday and the ordinary; to a Church trying to make sense of the world around it. They apply to multi-faceted daily encounters with individuals who may span a variety of ‘micro-cultures’ and can no longer be ‘pigeon-holed’ according to sex, class, race, neighbourhood or occupation. A generic attempt now to relate, for example, to ‘white, (notionally) Protestant, working-class, West of Scotland males’ is

⁷⁰⁴ Ibid, 223.

⁷⁰⁵ Dale T. Irvin, ‘The Church, the Urban, and Global Mission: Mission in an Age of Global Cities’, *International Bulletin of Missionary Research*, October 2009, 33/4: 177-182, 179.

increasingly meaningless, as the validity of the assumptions that those indices would conjure under modernity in relation to social standing, cultural preferences, and human association is dissipating.

The defining words for future religion in Western society are, therefore, that communities of faith will be plural, disparate, culturally individual and especially 'local'. 'Local', in this sense, however, does not just mean the immediate geographical surroundings ('the parish'), but also encompasses the 'micro-cultures' which those within the immediate geographical area more commonly inhabit.

If 'local' mission is therefore pertinent in the social circumstances of the West, how does that particularly engage the laity of the Church? The laity are uniquely placed in their avenues of access to the 'micro-cultures' in which they reside or participate, either geographically or through identity formed by common interest. It is only through the lives of individuals and small groups that cultural connections might be made, and the divide between private and public realms crossed. Any attempt by a large institution such as the Church to establish reciprocity with the 'local' and the individual is fraught with potential ambiguity and misalignment – the key is relationship in community.

How then, would a vision of emerging 'local' communities of faith survive the processes of globalisation, secularism and post-modernisation, in contrast to those Christian projects that are welded to modernity? The interaction for Hoedemaker must be through a process of 'glocalization'⁷⁰⁶, whereby there is a forming and undoing of the 'local', in conversation with the 'global'. In other words, rather than modernism imposing one dominant form of culture or religious viewpoint from the general to the particular, the movement is the reverse: the particular locality forms an interactive space with the general, and is thus open to reflection and self-reformation at local level in the light of the insights of the general.

⁷⁰⁶ A concept which Hoedemaker takes from Roland Robertson, 'Glocalization: Time-Space and Homogeneity-Heterogeneity', in M. Featherston, Scott Lash, and Roland Robertson, eds., *Global Modernities*, (London: Sage, 1995), 9-34.

Thus, for Hoedemaker, ‘in the situation of glocalization, to put it very succinctly, *rationality is global, religion is local*’. This combination serves to undermine any attempt at the over-arching imposition of religious norms: ‘What remains of modern synthesis is pulled apart in local, plural religion on the one hand and global, secular rationality on the other. *Globalization itself diminishes the necessity of the containment of religion*’.⁷⁰⁷

But is Christianity not reliant at its core on a global outlook? If one is to retain a concept of an identifiable ‘Christian tradition’, what is still required is ‘a master image of how all local manifestations of Christian faith belong together.’⁷⁰⁸ Hoedemaker suggests that the path may lie in the engagement by local Christian communities with each other in the search for common identity, whereby:

Ecumenism will then mean the creation of networks in which a critical testing takes place of whatever presents itself as ‘Christian faith’ across the world, and in which a common memory is both constructed and maintained.⁷⁰⁹

Therefore, for Hoedemaker, ‘mission is the effort to localize and actualize the promise that God is constructing *one* heaven and earth for a *diverse* and *pluriform* humanity.’⁷¹⁰

In other words, as Andrew Walls expresses the connection, there must be an identification of a necessary but essential tension between the operation of an ‘indigenizing principle’ by which Christians will associate with the ‘particulars of their culture and group’, in conjunction with a ‘pilgrim principle’ associating them with influences outwith their culture as a ‘universalizing factor’.⁷¹¹

Globalization in the modern context has not produced a unified world-wide consensus in Protestantism by amalgamating the varied geographical or theological cultures on common ground, or even formed the appropriate context by which such a consensus might be forged. Nor, indeed, has it opened the door to forms of unification with the Roman

⁷⁰⁷ Hoedemaker, ‘Mission Beyond Modernity’, 228.

⁷⁰⁸ Ibid, 229.

⁷⁰⁹ Ibid, 230.

⁷¹⁰ Ibid, 231.

⁷¹¹ Andrew Walls, *The Missionary Movement in Christian History*, (New York: Orbis Books, 1996), 9.

Catholic Church. Now the time is passing with the twilight of the modern enterprise where such consensus or unification might be achievable.

If Hoedemaker is correct in his assertions that (a) the old global ecumenical conciliar Protestant and Orthodox vision inspired by the lay movements of the 19th Century, drawn from the International Missionary Conference of 1910, and reaching its peak in the immediate post-war period, is doomed to extinction because it is intrinsically mired in modernist propositions which are disappearing from global view, and (b) that any new conception must respect the process of ‘glocalization’; then in the writer’s proposition, ‘local’, lay, ecumenical, contextual theology and mission *praxis* which is informed in critical reflection with the ‘global’, becomes one of few viable future visions which might involve the institutional Churches.

5.3 ‘CROSS CULTURAL TRANSLATION’ AND ‘INTERCULTURATION’- HOW DO THE LAITY RECOGNISE THE CROSSING OF CULTURAL BOUNDARIES, AND WHAT DOES THIS MEAN FOR THEOLOGY AND MISSION?

In the compulsion of participation in the *missio Dei*, and in recognition of the ‘local’ informed by the ‘global’, what Gospel have the laity to express in this context? Are they receiving as well as giving?

The error from which Tom Allan sought to depart was the assumption under an ‘accommodation’ of culture in the ‘home mission’ of the inter-war years and the post-war rural and island campaigns of D.P. Thomson, that Scotland was essentially Christianised and thus mono-cultural. This led to the fallacy that an irreducible core of cultural and theological norms fell to be parachuted into any given surroundings irrespective of the context. Thus the process of ‘becoming a Christian’ was to involve the supplanting of the cultural and theological assumptions of the donor, over against the recipient.

The drive of the ‘New Evangelism’ of the post-war decade, from the landmark of the Baillie Commission onwards, accepted that such ‘top-down’ enforcement was no longer viable, because of the distance that had emerged from inner faith to outward life, of the Gospel from the community, of the laity of the Church from their fellows outwith, and of the theology of the Church from the social and political ills of the nation.

If the ‘culture’ to which aspects of faith were to be contextualised was now to be of the utmost importance in setting the agenda for mission and Christian life, then it had to be properly identified in its particular locality. Allan’s solution was ‘visitation evangelism’ and the parish survey. In that process, Scotland of the Fifties maintained some definitive and identifiable cultural distinctions. ‘The parish’ could be roughly reduced to a bounded set, given that the fluidity of movement in society was lesser than the present day, and the familial bonds within a strong, local community were more evident. The surveys of ‘visitation evangelism’ could thus identify with some certainty the target culture(s) of the parish by uncovering only location and expressed nominal Christian denomination: alternative ethnicity, religious faith other than Christianity or overt atheism were the exception, and social class could be more readily defined by the very look of the area.

In the present era, any attempt at a broad one-dimensional Gospel expression across a nation like Scotland, or a limitation to contextualisation by stamping a ‘cultural label’ within a small, defined geographical area such as a parish boundary, has become more difficult and artificial.⁷¹²

We live in a dispersion of ‘micro-cultures’, founded less on geographical location, which may be merely a matter of temporary convenience, and less too on social status. ‘Culture’ has splintered even within geographical areas towards indices of ‘identity’.⁷¹³ A single

⁷¹² ‘In no more than two decades Scotland has gone through such profound transformations that, in some important aspects, it is barely recognizable as the same place’ – Lindsay Paterson, Frank Bechofer and David McCrone, *Living in Scotland: Social and Economic Change since 1980*, (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2004), 149.

⁷¹³ On issues of ‘identity’ in Scotland under indices such as class, gender, nationhood and religion, see David McCrone, *Understanding Scotland: The Sociology of a Nation*, (London: Routledge, 2nd Edition, 2001), Chapter 7, ‘Routes and Roots: Seeking Scottish Identity’, 149-174, quoting (at 150) the sociologist Zygmunt Bauman: ‘if the modern ‘problem’ of identity was how to construct an identity and keep it solid and stable, the postmodern ‘problem of identity’ is primarily how to keep the options open.’ See also John Curtice, David McCrone, Alison Park & Lindsay Paterson (eds), *New Scotland, New Society? Are Social and Political Ties Fragmenting?*, (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2002);

definition of culture within the immediate locality of a parish Church building, given the diversification of individuals and their identity (or identities), has therefore become increasingly elusive. This renders the task of the local Church in contextualising mission all the more challenging and confused. There comes the recognition of a cross-cultural element to any approach to mission which emanates from the institution, which may therefore need to be multi-faceted, and plural in form, depending on the immediate situation.

The gulf between Church and world which Allan identified, and by which his model partially foundered, has widened considerably over the past half century in contemporary Scotland; a situation replicated across Western Europe and North America. It would be a mistake to conclude that the culture of the institutional Church automatically attunes with any surrounding culture; or perhaps it is better considered that it is simply a ‘micro-culture’ of itself, one of many. The present Church institution begins its attempts at cross-cultural mission at a disadvantage: its very ‘Churchiness’ of assumed language, norms of behaviour and educated liturgy is a somewhat pale reflection of many of the present micro-cultures of society.

How then can the Church in a particular locality hope to translate a Gospel hidebound in ‘Churchiness’ to those in the laity’s wider sphere of influence within ‘micro-cultures’ of society? It might start by the simple recognition of the problem: that the cross-cultural experience is at the heart of the expression of the Gospel, both for the giver and the receiver, and that the Gospel is never enacted in word or deed in a vacuum without the imposition of the culturally acquired inflexions of the giver, in terms of language, norms of behaviour, ecclesiology, and biblical exegesis.

In that recognition within our present existence as part of a multiplicity of ‘micro-cultures’ in a ‘late modern’ Western society such as Scotland, just as Allan, Benedict and Fraser

and the historical, cultural analysis of secularisation and postmodernism within Chapter 2, of ‘The 1960s and Secularisation’ within Chapter 8, and of ‘The End of a Long Story’ within Chapter 9, in Callum G. Brown, *The Death of Christian Britain* (Christianity and Society in the Modern World), (London: Routledge, 2001).

realised, the parallels of the past worldwide missionary experience from the West in a cross-cultural context can be drawn.

The cross-cultural missionary movement from the fifteenth century onwards, so closely related to the European colonial age, had, as David Smith notes, an ‘unintended consequence’, through its effect to ‘open channels of knowledge and communication which would challenge European assumptions and liberate Christianity from its identification with the culture of the Western world.’⁷¹⁴

For Western culture, ‘the discovery of peoples and cultures outside Christendom, and the gradual realisation that these alternative world-views posed previously unheard of questions for theology, was deeply challenging for a Church so long conditioned by the thought and culture of Europe.’⁷¹⁵ For the first time in a millennium, Western Christian theology and ecclesiology had to face the reality of cultural and religious pluralism.

The experience that Vincent Donovan describes in Africa with the Masai in the Seventies in *Christianity Re-Discovered*⁷¹⁶ is, in its essence, the discovery of the necessity for bi-lateral dialogue in the future of Christian mission. It envisages a radical exchange, a mutual growth and development by the birth of a new theological and cultural creation through the meeting of a Gospel conditioned in the donor’s culture with the culture of the recipient, through which theological insight on new grounds for both can burst forth and flourish.

Thus for Lamin Sanneh the notion of a ‘dynamic equivalence’ between cultures in the missionary engagement entails that:

Mission as translation makes the bold, fundamental assertion that the recipient culture is the authentic destination of God’s salvific promise and as a consequence, has an honored place under the ‘kindness of God’...By drawing a distinction between the message and the surrogate, mission as translation affirms the *missio Dei* as the hidden force for its work.⁷¹⁷

⁷¹⁴ David Smith, *Mission after Christendom*, (London: Darton, Longman and Todd, 2003), 15.

⁷¹⁵ Ibid.

⁷¹⁶ Vincent J. Donovan, *Christianity Re-Discovered*, (New York: Orbis, 1982).

⁷¹⁷ Lamin Sanneh, *Translating the Message: The Missionary Impact on Culture* (New York: Orbis Books, 1989), 62.

At the immediate practical level, Donovan recognised that in his Gospel encounter with the Masai his role was one of learner as well as teacher, with both sides leading towards a higher understanding and enlightenment of the contextual relevance of Christ:

Going back and forth among these pagan communities week by week, I soon realized that not one week would go by without some surprising rejoinder or reaction or revelation from these Masai. My education was beginning in earnest.⁷¹⁸

Thus, as Spencer comments, ‘this was not, then, a one-way street for mission: there was significant traffic in both directions. Donovan was bringing the gospel to share with the Masai but the language and idioms open to him were those of the Masai, and these were forcing him to rethink and recast his understanding of the Gospel.’⁷¹⁹

The mistake of a literal, fundamentalist approach in the application of what might be characterised as a ‘simple faith’ acquired by a reading of the ‘plain language’ of the Bible is a failure to recognise the differing cultural inflexions and relativity of the transmission of Scripture. Firstly, the transmission of Scripture is influenced by the prevalent culture in the initial drafting of the books of the Canon. Secondly, it is influenced by the cultural context in which those engaged in mission have previously acquired faith themselves, and its effect upon their appreciation, and application to their surroundings, of the meaning of Scripture. Thirdly, there are the contrary cultural contexts of the recipient in the process of transmission, meaning that the way in which the recipient comprehends a transmitted Gospel message is crucial. This encounter inevitably involves the clash of the culturally affected Gospel of the missionary, already formed at an oblique angle to the recipient, with the assimilation of that message within a second culture context, whose modes of comprehension will be influenced by often entirely separate norms.

A realisation that this is a theological cross-fertilisation process brought about by genuine dialogue would recognise, as David Bosch expresses it, that ‘inculturation can never be a *fait accompli*’ but instead engages as a ‘tentative and continuing process.’⁷²⁰

⁷¹⁸ Donovan, *Christianity Re-Discovered*, 41.

⁷¹⁹ Stephen Spencer, *SCM Study Guide to Christian Mission*, (London: SCM Press, 2007), 162.

⁷²⁰ Bosch, *Transforming Mission*, 455.

In the relationship of the laity of the institutional Church with the ‘micro-cultures’ of society in Scotland and other developed nations of the West, just as in the encounter of missionaries from one region of the world with another in the past and present, heed must be taken of the necessity of dialogue between Church theology and the culture in which it is exercised, and the consequent exchange that occurs through that ‘tentative and continuing’ process. In Bosch’s elucidation of that necessity and its effect can be read not only the dichotomies of the past in the missionary experience of the past between ‘Western theology’ and the ‘Third World’, but also now within the Western nations between a ‘Church-based theology’ and local culture:

The relationship between the Christian message and culture is a creative and dynamic one, and full of surprises. There is no eternal theology, no *theologia perennis* which may play the referee over “local theologies”. In the past, Western theology arrogated to itself the right to be such an arbitrator in respect to Third-World theologies. It implicitly viewed itself as fully indigenized, inculturated, a finished product. We are beginning to realise that this was inappropriate, that Western theologies (plural!) – just as much as all the others- were theologies in the making, theologies in the *process* of being contextualized and indigenized.⁷²¹

If ever a Western theology had the right to assume that it was safely rooted as a contextualised, inculturated whole, cognisant and reflective of the culture within which it stood, then those times have now surely passed. Whereas a strident ecclesiology and Christian dominance within state education once exercised control over the formation of the cultural norms, morals and expectations of a Western nation such as Scotland, and therefore in a sense ‘Church theology’ could be said to have reflected those norms almost by creating them, the past half century has eradicated that power and influence.

Therefore, the laity exercising ‘local’ Western mission must re-learn the contextual relevance of the Gospel, both in the ‘culturisation of Christianity’ and the ‘Christianisation of culture’. A marked effort of the Church as institution through the laity to embark on such a voyage of bi-lateral exchange to the ‘micro-cultures’ which they inhabit is of the

⁷²¹ Ibid, 456.

essence – an essential requirement if the Christian Church in the Scotland and beyond is not destined to dwindle further in decline.

Once there is the fundamental realisation that acquired theologies remain ‘*in the process* of being contextualized and indigenized’, then it may follow that the old fallacy of mission by ‘God-Church-World’ might finally be dispensed with, some sixty years after Willingen and the formation of *missio Dei* theology. If the idea can be dismissed that acquired faith must be transferred as a unitary object, intact and in its entirety, over the territorial frontier by ‘going out’ to ‘those beyond’ to ‘convert’ not only to Christ but also to our cultural sub-set, then it may further be recognised, as Bosch crucially describes, that ‘what we are involved in is not just inculturation but “interculturation”, or an ‘exchange of theologies.’⁷²²

In genuine dialogue with local culture, the old language of occupation from a vertical pathway of deliverance of the Gospel to those ‘unreached’ may be replaced ‘first by bilateral and then by multilateral relationships.’⁷²³ It is then that the Christian Churches and their laity might ‘discover, to their amazement, that they are not simply benefactors, and [those in society] not merely beneficiaries, but that all are, at the same time, giving and receiving, that a kind of osmosis is taking place.’⁷²⁴

If mission then is to be carried out by the laity, in participation within the *missio Dei*, in the ‘local’ situation, recognising cross-cultural translation and seeking ‘interculturation’, what are the core requirements of such ‘mission’?

Flowing from such observations, there are certain key definitional concepts from recent missiological works which, in my view, are complementary to the consideration in this Chapter of the place of the laity within *missio Dei* theology, and in the process of cross-cultural mission. They serve to summarise what ‘mission’ must then entail.

⁷²² Bosch, *Transforming Mission*, 456.

⁷²³ Ibid.

⁷²⁴ Ibid.

5.4 ‘PROPHETIC DIALOGUE’ – UNDER WHAT DEFINITION AND FOUNDATION OF MISSION SHOULD THE LAITY ACT?

What is the ‘mission’ to be focused upon that local laity might exercise to the ‘micro-cultures’ in which they live? Is it simply the oral proclamation of the Gospel for evangelistic purposes? What sort of engagement should occur? Mere contact, or good works, or something deeper?

Proceeding from the broad guidelines of lay empowerment and contextualisation in the exercise of mission to which this thesis is inclined, inherent within identification of relevant aspects for this day of Tom Allan and his contemporaries are foundational definitions of ‘mission’ and ‘evangelism’, and further missiological building blocks, in the concepts to follow in this section. They are non-exclusive and necessarily selective. They are set out at this stage in their own terms in short compass, in the belief that they are directly applicable to what has gone before, and form a framework for the final conclusions to follow.

(a) Definitions of ‘Mission’ and ‘Evangelism’

As to ‘what is mission?’, the following broad definition of ‘mission’ is offered: ‘the audible or visible expression of the Gospel in word or deed relative to others which seeks to inductively inspire, through the further movement of the Holy Spirit, an interculturalisation of cultures and theologies, whereby there emerges (a) a relationship of faith in others in their context with God, and/or (b) the contextual advancement of His Kingdom of love, justice and peace’.

The definitional distinctions of the World Council of Churches in 2000 are further adopted as guideposts:

- (a) ‘Mission’ carries a holistic understanding of the proclamation and sharing of the good news of the gospel by word (*kerygma*), deed (*diakonia*), prayer and

worship (*leiturgia*), and the everyday witness of the Christian life (*martyria*); teaching as building up and strengthening people in their relationship with God and each other; and healing as wholeness and reconciliation into *koinonia* - communion with God, communion with people, and communion with creation as a whole.

(b) 'Evangelism', while not excluding the different dimensions of mission, focuses on explicit and intentional voicing of the gospel, including the invitation to personal conversion to a new life in Christ, and to discipleship.⁷²⁵

Thus 'evangelism' is not fully equated with 'mission', but is a kerygmatic subset of the broader means and methods of 'mission', each of which bear equal validity and purpose. It is towards the holistic definition of 'mission' by the laity that the present thesis is directed.

(b) Framework Concepts: Paradigm Shifts in Mission and 'Prophetic Dialogue'

David Bosch in his seminal work *Transforming Mission: Paradigm Shifts in Theology of Mission* of 1991 adopted the schemata of Hans Küng,⁷²⁶ in identifying six distinctive periods of Christian history and mission as 'paradigms'. To this, Bosch applied 'as a working hypothesis'⁷²⁷ the notion of 'paradigm shifts', taken from the work of Thomas Kuhn, physician and historian of science.⁷²⁸ Bosch saw the beginnings of every 'paradigm shift' in the work of 'a group of pioneers' who sense that an existing model is 'unable to serve emerging problems' and thus begin to 'search for a new model...that is, as it were, waiting in the wings, ready to replace the old.'⁷²⁹

Bosch thus identified since World War II the beginnings of a 'paradigm shift' in mission from Küng's 'modern, Enlightenment paradigm' towards the identification of 'elements of an emerging ecumenical paradigm', elsewhere described by Bosch as 'postmodern'.⁷³⁰

⁷²⁵ *Mission and Evangelism in Unity Today* (2000), para 7, within *You are the Light of the World: Statements on Mission by the World Council of Churches 1980-2005*, (Geneva: World Council of Churches, 2005).

⁷²⁶ Hans Kung & David Tracy (eds), *Paradigm Shifts in Theology*, (Edinburgh: T&T Clark, 1989).

⁷²⁷ Bosch, *Transforming Mission*, 184.

⁷²⁸ See *ibid*, 183-189.

⁷²⁹ *Ibid*, 184.

⁷³⁰ The latter being 'an awkward term' which he later replaces with 'ecumenical' – *ibid*, 531, fn1.

Bosch set out thirteen ‘elements’ which he explored in detail, as essential to any ‘emerging paradigm’, namely ‘mission as’ : ‘the Church-with-others’, ‘*Missio Dei*’, ‘Mediating Salvation’, ‘the Quest for Justice’, ‘Evangelism’, ‘Contextualization’, ‘Liberation’, ‘Inculturation’, ‘Common Witness’, ‘Ministry by the Whole People of God’, ‘Witness to People of other Living Faiths’, ‘Theology’, and ‘Action in Hope’.⁷³¹

As to the mode of mission in present and future, in a classic exposition of the mindset and attitude which must inform the exercise of mission, Bosch wrote:

...we regard our involvement in dialogue and mission as an adventure, are prepared to take risks, and are anticipating surprises as the Spirit guides us into fuller understanding. This is not opting for agnosticism, but for humility. It is, however, *a bold humility – or a humble boldness*. We know only in part, but we do not know. And we believe that the faith which we profess is both true and just, and should be proclaimed. We do this, however, not as judges or lawyers, but as witnesses; not as soldiers, but as envoys of peace; not as high-pressure salespersons, but as ambassadors of the Servant Lord.⁷³²

The language of ‘paradigms’ is not, however, without its difficulties in this context, insofar as it might pre-suppose that shifts between ‘paradigms’ in mission are readily identifiable, or that any era is not, of necessity, an amalgam of ideas that may fit both the emerging and preceding paradigm, as has been seen in the work of Tom Allan – ‘a tale of two paradigms’. Therefore, their utility as definitional structures through which to form the future of mission, rather than analysing the past, is called into question, if they are reduced to generalities which are inherent with a degree of imprecision.

Following from Bosch, rather than utilising a framework of developing and overlapping paradigms to conceive of the potential direction of emerging missiology, in his 1996 essay ‘The Gospel as Prisoner and Liberator of Culture’,⁷³³ the Scottish missiologist Andrew Walls offered instead two ‘constants’ from the history of Christianity which might

⁷³¹ Ibid, Chapter 12.

⁷³² Ibid, 489.

⁷³³ Andrew F. Walls, ‘The Gospel as Prisoner and Liberator of Culture’, in *The Missionary Movement in Christian History: Studies in the Transmission of Faith*, (Maryknoll, N.Y., Orbis Books, 1996), 3-15.

underlie the foundations of mission, no matter the age, theological or cultural outlook, and thus serve as necessary marks of any present missiological construct.

The primary constant is one of Christology in that ‘the person of Jesus called the Christ has ultimate significance’,⁷³⁴ a focus with which Allan would have readily agreed. The secondary constant relates to ecclesiology, in the sense, as Bevans and Schroeder later described it, that Christians ‘will always see themselves as a community that is nourished and equipped for its work in the world by both word and sacrament’, thus maintaining an emphasis on ‘the constant use of the Bible; the sacramental significance of Eucharist and baptism; and a consciousness of continuity with Israel.’⁷³⁵

In their formative work on a theology of mission from 2004 entitled *Constants in Context: A Theology of Mission for Today*,⁷³⁶ comparable in its breadth and depth to Bosch’s *Transforming Mission*, the American Roman Catholic missiologists Stephen B. Bevans and Roger P. Schroeder supplemented Walls’ two constants of Christology and ecclesiology with four more of their own. They argued that the approach taken to the six constants in answering the questions raised by them has historically determined, and will determine, the expression of mission in all epochs and contexts:

1. Eschatology, and the issue of to what extent the Church is called upon to participate in the attempted fulfilment of the Kingdom of God on earth;
2. Salvation, and the focus of the Church’s preaching either upon inner spiritual purity, or transformation by wholeness and holistic healing;
3. Anthropology, with the determination of Christianity of the human condition and its value or otherwise; and
4. Culture, as a vehicle or obstruction for the communication of the Gospel.⁷³⁷

⁷³⁴ Walls, ‘The Gospel as Prisoner and Liberator of Culture’, 6.

⁷³⁵ Stephen B. Bevans & Roger P. Schroeder, *Constants in Context: A Theology of Mission for Today*, (Maryknoll, New York: Orbis Books, 2004), 33.

⁷³⁶ Stephen B. Bevans & Roger P. Schroeder, *Constants in Context: A Theology of Mission for Today*, (Maryknoll, N.Y., Orbis Books, 2004).

⁷³⁷ Bevans & Schroeder, *Constants in Context*, 34.

The basis of Bevans and Schroeder's work is thus formed around the six 'constants'.⁷³⁸

Bevans and Schroeder proceeded in the main body of *Constants in Context* to examine how the questions raised by the six constants have been answered in the history of theology and mission in each period. They sought to do so under each of three broad categorisations of 'types of theology' on a spectrum from 'orthodox/conservative', to 'liberal' to 'radical/liberation theology', whereby 'every attitude in mission can be seen as a logical consequence of a distinct perspective that is characteristic of one of the three.'⁷³⁹

Bevans and Schroeder's further novel contribution in the concluding section of *Constants in Context* was to begin to develop a concept of 'prophetic dialogue' as an over-arching determinative, or 'paradigm', with the potential to underpin and help define all elements in the future of mission where the 'types of theology' relate to the 'constants', describing:

...a synthesis that would serve well as an underlying theology of mission for these first years of the twenty-first century and the third millennium. We propose to call this synthesis *prophetic dialogue*.⁷⁴⁰

As they later indicated, taking the 'types of theology' and the 'constants', Bevans and Schroeder's bold conception in the final chapter was to establish 'prophetic dialogue' in relation to what they viewed as the six essential elements of the practice of mission (as opposed to Bosch's thirteen 'elements of an emerging ecumenical paradigm') that their work had identified. Thus, 'prophetic dialogue' could be seen as an:

...*overarching umbrella* for an understanding of the various elements in the practice of mission- *witness and proclamation; liturgy, prayer and contemplation; justice, peace and the integrity of creation; interreligious dialogue; inculturation; and reconciliation*. Each of these components can be understood from a

⁷³⁸ See *ibid*, 72.

⁷³⁹ *Ibid*, 35.

⁷⁴⁰ *Ibid*, 348.

‘dialogical’ perspective and each can also be understood from a perspective of ‘prophecy’.⁷⁴¹

Summarising the ‘complex reality’ of mission, as well as their liking for numerical groupings (!), there is thus:

- One mission – ‘the mission of God that is shared by the Church’
- In two directions – ‘to the Church itself (ad intra) and to the world (ad extra)
- Under a threefold structure – of word (kerygma), action (diakonia) and being (koinonia or martyria);
- In four fields of activity – pastoral work, the new evangelisation of those who have not heard the Gospel, the re-evangelisation of those who have but lapsed, and the transformation of the world
- Under the six elements, as above.⁷⁴²

What is mission as ‘dialogue’? It is to reflect the perfect Triune nature of God, such that the Church ‘not only gives itself in service to the world’, but also ‘learns from its involvement’. As to the manner of the ‘dialogue’ with the world, ‘just as the Triune God’s missionary presence in creation is never about imposition..., mission can no longer proceed in ways that neglect the freedom and dignity of human beings. Nor can a Church that is rooted in a God that saves through self-emptying think of itself as culturally superior to the peoples among whom it works.’⁷⁴³

What is the ‘prophetic’ element? It entails an engagement with ‘the poor, with cultures and with other religions...to share the life of the poor...and speak out against what keeps them that way...to appreciate and critique human culture...and...to engage the truth of other religions whilst maintaining that Jesus is the Way, the Truth and the Life.’⁷⁴⁴

⁷⁴¹ *Prophetic Dialogue: Reflections on Christian Mission Today*, (Maryknoll, N.Y.: Orbis Books, 2011), 2.

⁷⁴² Bevens & Schroeder, *Constants in Context*, 394.

⁷⁴³ Ibid, 348.

⁷⁴⁴ Ibid, 349.

Bevans and Schroeder expanded in detail on the overarching theme in *Prophetic Dialogue: Reflections on Christian Mission Today* in 2011.⁷⁴⁵

In that work, they developed the concept of speaking or acting dialogically in ‘mission as prophecy’, in the following senses of the word ‘prophecy’:

- (a) ‘Speaking forth without words: witness’ – ‘as Christians live a life of vital community, of community service, of ecological integrity, of shared prayer that is beautiful and inspiring to visitors, they speak forth without words what the gospel is and what human life might be if the gospel is lived authentically.’⁷⁴⁶
- (b) ‘Speaking forth with words: proclamation’ – ‘they proclaim the message of the Reign of God...by telling the world about Jesus.’⁷⁴⁷
- (c) ‘Speaking against without words: being a contrast community’ – ‘profoundly countercultural – the Church ‘offers a different vision of the world than what is the natural drift of society...leading a simple life, standing for peace and justice, learning to forgive people who have offended us...learning to serve and not be served...these are all prophetic actions in a world that envisions success as being self-centred and having power over others.’⁷⁴⁸
- (d) ‘Speaking against in words: speaking truth to power’ – to speak out against any form of injustice

‘Prophetic dialogue’ is indelibly linked for Bevans and Schroeder to what they term ‘the spirituality of inculturation’, by which we exercise ‘mission in reverse’ in ‘reverence for the other, learning from our hosts, being vulnerable.’⁷⁴⁹ It is ‘where agents of inculturation need to live on the boundary...between Christianity and other religions, between

⁷⁴⁵ (Maryknoll, N.Y.: Orbis Books, 2011).

⁷⁴⁶ Bevans & Schroeder, *Prophetic Dialogue*, 44.

⁷⁴⁷ Ibid, 44-45.

⁷⁴⁸ Ibid, 46.

⁷⁴⁹ Ibid, 88-89.

Christianity and local culture, between orthodoxy and superstition, between authentic and inauthentic syncretism.’⁷⁵⁰

In conclusion, Bevans and Schroeder offer the following summary of ‘prophetic dialogue’:

Mission is not constituted by one or the other, but by both working together. There may be some situations in which *dialogue* may be the only way that Christians can continue to witness to the truth of their faith. Certainly, Christians must always respect the cultures, religions and contexts in which they live, and the peoples among whom they work. The basic attitude must be one of dialogue. On the other hand, there may be situations – when Christians are asked about their faith, as they live in a non-Christian or secular society, or when they find themselves in situations of grave injustice – when a clear, *prophetic* proclamation of and witness to the gospel is necessary. Like mission itself, prophetic dialogue is multifaceted. It includes respect, being open, on the one hand, and on the other the courage to live out and speak the truth – albeit gently (1 Pet. 3:15) – in prophecy.⁷⁵¹

Therefore, the final Chapter will seek to draw together the framework of Bosch, Walls and Bevans and Schroeder, and apply it to the main body of the thesis. In short summary of the above, any means of mission must recognise shifting social circumstances for which the notion of ‘paradigms’ may provide a starting point if not an ending; the six ‘constants’ of Walls, Bevans and Schroeder must always be present no matter which of the three types of theology may refer to them; the six essential elements of mission must be recognised, and throughout mission must be applied to ‘dialogical’ relationships and ‘prophecy’ in the sense of ‘speaking forth’ and ‘speaking against’.

It is in this fertile ground that we shall move towards conclusions on the work of Tom Allan and his fellow missiologists who form the centrepiece of the present thesis, who exercised, exemplify and illuminate the concepts of which Bevans and Schroeder now write, and who offer concrete references of modes of success and failure in doing so.

⁷⁵⁰ Ibid, 97.

⁷⁵¹ Ibid, 154-155.

We thus move to seek an answer to the question: utilising a retrieval of the models considered in Chapters 2 to 4, and recognising the prevailing social and missiological climate explored earlier within this Chapter, how can the laity and the Church now seek to engage in cross-cultural mission in the 'local' situation under the *missio Dei* in the exercise of the 'constants', the 'elements' and in 'prophetic dialogue'?

CHAPTER 6 -CONCLUSIONS-'RAISING LAZARUS IN BUCHANAN STREET'

Introduction

Paul Tillich in the third volume of his *Systematic Theology* writes of *kairoi*, the 'Kingdom of God in history', in both foundational and derivative senses. There is '...the 'great kairos', the appearance of the centre of history...',⁷⁵² manifested in the coming to earth of the son of God, Jesus Christ, being 'the world-historical event...which has established the centre of history once and for all.'⁷⁵³ Stemming from the 'great kairos', there are further 'the continually recurring and derivative *kairoi* in which a religious cultural group has an existential encounter with the central event.'⁷⁵⁴

Tillich is in no doubt that '*kairos*-experiences belong to the history of the Churches.'⁷⁵⁵ The Churches are therefore placed in a perpetual state of anticipation, awaiting the irruption of the Spirit in experiences of derivative *kairoi*, linking the Church directly to the person and incarnation of Christ. The perception of derivative *kairoi*, for Tillich, is located in spiritual consciousness and action: 'Awareness of a *kairos* is a matter of vision...It is not a matter of detached observation but of involved experience.'⁷⁵⁶ The waiting may be long, but is not in vain: 'For although the prophetic Spirit is latent or even repressed over long stretches of history, it is never absent and breaks through the barriers of the law in a *kairos*.'⁷⁵⁷

⁷⁵² Paul Tillich, *Systematic Theology*, 3 vols, (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1951-63), Vol 3, 395. See also Gene Mills, 'The Pneumatological Ekklesia: A Comparative and Constructive Work in Contemporary Ecclesiology', *Quodlibet Online Journal of Christian Theology and Philosophy*, Volume 4 Number 2-3, Summer 2002; 153,195, accessed at <http://www.quodlibet.net/articles/mills-tillich.shtml>.

⁷⁵³ Tillich, *Systematic Theology*, Vol 3, 163.

⁷⁵⁴ Ibid.

⁷⁵⁵ Ibid, 395.

⁷⁵⁶ Ibid.

⁷⁵⁷ Ibid.

We live in a time of crisis for mission in Protestant Christianity in the West, anticipating ‘derivative *kairoi*’ as signs and symbols of the actualisation of the Kingdom of God: encounters which might re-kindle the existential basis of the ‘world-historical event’ of Christ, and provide continuing affirmation of its relevance to ordinary Christians in community. Marginalised from the public marketplace of ideas; waning in social and cultural influence; reliant upon an ageing membership of decreasing strength; buffeted by constraints upon ministry and mission of diminishing financial and personnel resources; and beset by argument over Biblical infallibility and sexual morality: the catalogue of predicaments facing the Church in Scotland may be diffuse and iridescent, but they are not peculiar to a single Western nation. Recognising their persistence as a microcosm of a more widespread malaise, time is of the essence for Reformed Christianity in Scotland and beyond in the Northern Hemisphere.

At the conclusion of his insightful examination of the potential emerging paradigm for *Mission after Christendom*, David Smith quoted the Dutch missionary theologian Johannes Verkuyl; that Christ’s promise is to be with the Church ‘all of her days’, and so ‘the Church must forever be asking ‘What kind of day is it today?’ For no two days are alike in her history.’⁷⁵⁸ This thesis seeks to further engage in that essential task, through a like process to what Paul Ricoeur termed ‘the hermeneutics of retrieval’.⁷⁵⁹ It has sought to retrieve the theology and practice of missiology in Scotland in the immediate post-war period, as a case study in the broader Western Reformed context, to seek to re-discover ‘for this day’ the mode and means to communicate the Gospel in the public arena, to relate faith to the lives of ordinary people, in the context of the prevalent culture(s).

The current presentation of the laity is often a state of confusion as to the meaning of mission in a diverse and plural world, fostering a lack of confidence or motivation in its exercise. The consequent risk is stasis, introversion and the ossification of the institutional

⁷⁵⁸ With reference to Matthew 8:20 - David Smith, *Mission after Christendom*, (London: Darton, Longman & Todd, 2003), 133.

⁷⁵⁹ As quoted by Douglas Gay, *Re-Mixing the Church: Towards and Emerging Ecclesiology*, (London: SCM Press, 2011), 20, in the context of the recovery within the ‘emerging Church’ conversation of pre-Reformation liturgy and ritual.

faith to a one-dimensional form, in which it will conform to its assigned role of a distant, privatised voice in a public maelstrom, leaving the public/private divide maintained.

Unclear and unsure of their capabilities and potential, the laity are thus often restrained within the insular business management of Church, in acceptance of clergy domination and in a dearth of low-level, everyday social expression of Christian word and deed. There thus pervades an air of uncertainty that veers towards fatalism in the purported exercise of the primary task of the Church as institution, which defines its very existence and provides the heartbeat of its life: that of engagement with the world in mission and evangelism.

Meanwhile, the hierarchy of the institutional Churches are focused on managed decline, or look to cling to the last vestiges of establishment, equipping their saints not with a purposeful missiological outlook, but to be trained in semi-clerical roles as ‘mini-pastors’. The clergy/laity divide is perpetuated and exacerbated at the very moment when it needs to be extinguished, restricting the lay talents of those whom Hendrik Kraemer described as the ‘frozen credits’.⁷⁶⁰

The laity stand in a unique position in their relationship with the social and ecclesial challenges discussed in the Introduction and in Chapter 5. They are centrally placed to access as individuals the ‘micro-cultures’ in which they move, to a depth and resonance far beyond the Church as institution; to identify the ‘local’, whether it be in identities formed geographically or on the basis of lifestyle choice; to cross cultural boundaries in contextualising Christianity in word and deed as both learners and teachers; to act in ‘prophetic dialogue’ with those in their cultural milieu; to inform the ‘what’ and ‘how’ with the ‘why’; to seek to relate the ‘local’ to the ‘global’ Christian narrative; and, dialogically and prophetically, to look towards a form of ‘interculturalisation’ of Christianity

⁷⁶⁰ See Hendrik Kraemer, *A Theology of the Laity*, (London: Lutterworth Press, 1958), 176-180.

and culture whereby well-springs of Christian community might rise up, with or without reference to the institution.

The starting point of a redress for the laity is the identification ‘for this day’ in Christ of the deeper meaning and practice of lay Christian calling in mission, in interaction with the world, which might then provide a springboard for contextual practice. The streams of missiology which have been studied from the immediate post-war period inform that process.

In conclusion, the focus will initially be upon the practical ‘successes’ of the missiology of Tom Allan in drawing towards those goals in his time, turning thereafter to the lessons of all four streams, and then considering the journey towards the recovery of the laity in mission. Drawing all of their work together through the lens of current global missiology, derivative principles for future mission by the laity are then offered.

6.1 THE MISSIOLOGY OF TOM ALLAN

As he neared the end of his ministry at St George’s Tron, one of full engagement and self-offering to all around him, Tom Allan wrote:

Jesus orders us out into the highways and byways, into the streets and lanes of the city, to meet with people wherever they are, and whether they recognise their need for God or not.⁷⁶¹

In those encounters in the streets and lanes of the city, at the core of his ministry Allan’s demonstration was of compassion to all as an outpouring of God’s love, seeking expression of the Gospel in word and deed, towards common understanding and growth of community. It was a ‘Trinitarian and yet also socially contextualized approach’,⁷⁶² reflective of the nature of God, revealed through Christ as familial and interdependent.

⁷⁶¹ AA6.5.2 & AA6.11.7, *EC*, ‘My Friend the Criminal’, 10/08/63.

⁷⁶² Storrar, ‘A Tale of Two Paradigms’, 64.

Trinitarian mission for Paul Fiddes is *perichoresis*, a ‘reciprocity and exchange in the mutual indwelling of persons’. Participation between humans is constitutive of their existence, and further through ‘sharing in speech and worship, in the flow of relationships themselves.’ In a phrase which might sum up Allan’s missiology at St George’s Tron, Fiddes states that by such a process of reciprocity and exchange, people ‘share in God rather than attempting to observe God’.⁷⁶³

In that process of reciprocation occurs the inevitable dilemma of ‘bridging the gap’ between Church and world. As Bill Shannon reflected, ‘[Allan] felt isolated by his culture, theology and even the ‘dog-collar’ and driven to despair by the communication gap between the Christian faith...and the stolid indifference evident in the parish which treated the Church and the Faith as irrelevant.’⁷⁶⁴

Allan thus acted to address the major problems in the translation of the Gospel in Scotland in the immediate post-war period, which he identified as ‘contact, communication and consolidation,’⁷⁶⁵ whose difficulties remain apposite to the present. Without using words or phrases such as ‘cross-cultural translation’, ‘contextualisation’ and ‘interculturalisation’, his missiology demonstrated a fullness and maturity which showed his awareness of their importance.

To address those problems, Allan applied notions of ‘contextualisation’ to a model of the ‘apostolate of the laity’ centred on a ‘missionary parish’ and consequentially a purged and re-invigorated parish Church.

A principal element of the success of Allan’s model in both of his parishes, but in particular at St George’s Tron, was the unity of the Word preached and demonstrated. The Gospel was made real in ordinary lives by a recognition that the parish Church and its message existed for all people at all times, in an absolute self-giving for the need of others, especially the lowly and the destitute on the streets around. Salvation and social justice

⁷⁶³ Paul Fiddes, *Participating in God: A Pastoral Doctrine of the Trinity*, (London: Darton, Longman and Todd, 2000), 71-72.

⁷⁶⁴ Shannon, *Tom Allan: In a Nutshell*, 4.

⁷⁶⁵ AA6, Recording of Speech at Canadian ‘Keswick’ Convention, June 1963.

were brought together in a fully incarnated Word, within Allan's 'both/and' missiology to use 'every God-given method', whereby the transformational power of the Gospel through Christ was combined with friendship, acceptance, and community. Thieves, prostitutes, drunks and the homeless on the streets of Glasgow and at the Rehabilitation Centre were as much his 'congregation' and loved equally by his God as those at the Sunday service.

At St George's Tron, Allan thus approached a fuller implementation of his model: office bearers and members working together, the laity as the whole people of God. They caught his vision, understood what it entailed in terms of their own social responsibility in the exercise of their faith, and acted upon it in a dynamic way.

The promise of the Tell Scotland Movement in the years 1954-1955 to successfully adapt and develop such a model at a national level was evident. However, transposing to the national stage a local model based on slow, organic growth from the ground level upwards could only succeed if there was full delegation to that level, and an unity of purpose in both preaching for salvation and instigating social action towards a redeemed community. The imposition of one theological strand, or a single prominent individual, would lead to dissent within the Movement, confusion as to method, and the ready assumption that the meaning of mission was centred only within those parameters.

Billy Graham preached a personal evangel with no social content. Graham's method drowned the efforts of lay witness. He split the Tell Scotland Movement at a crucial period in Scottish social history, when otherwise unity in local mission might have served Christianity to buffet the onslaught of secularisation.

The Crusade regressed the understanding of what mission is and can be amongst the laity and clergy of Scotland for a generation, and continues to do so for some today. It eradicated from the national agenda Allan's promising lay model. With the benefit of hindsight, Allan's invitation to Graham was a mistake. If the future of mission in Scotland lies once again with the laity of the Church, mass evangelism is obsolete.

In Chapter 3, in-depth analysis of Allan's missiology was offered, setting it in personal, local, national and global context, assessing its sociological, historical, ecclesiological and theological bases.

From that analysis, it becomes clearer that Allan was deeply influenced by his upbringing, and by ongoing friendships with William Fitch and D.P. Thomson, insofar as a theological answer might be sought as to why Allan chose to embrace mass evangelism, in apparent stark contradiction to the principles of local, lay missional growth of which he had cogently written and practised in the previous eight years. That decision was influenced too by his own 'conversion experience' in Reims in 1945, and by his underlying evangelical theology.

Early experiences at Trinity College and in his close links to D.P. Thomson led Allan to a concentration on mission, but remaining focused on the Church as the only true agent of Christ, as, at least potentially, a model of *koinonia*.

Whilst Allan drew inspiration from his Scottish Presbyterian tradition, he inherited a Church in need of radical reform in terms of its legacy of the inter-war years and its distance from the struggles of the everyday lives of its parishioners. Scotland of the immediate post-war era, however, retained a 'willing ear' for Christianity, given its place in society. Social and economic conditions lent themselves to a resurgence of faith, in combination with the dynamism of post-war Church leaders such as Allan and George MacLeod, and their theological and missiological perspectives. Despite their mutual dedication to the poor, left-wing politics, a recognition that Christianity had to be re-framed to relate to everyday life, and similar models of parish mission, Allan and MacLeod parted on the need for 'conversion' prior to engagement with social action.

Allan's genius was to immediately apply European missiology contextually to his parishes in Glasgow, in particular being inspired by the work of Abbé Godin in Paris. His focus throughout his ministry was upon 'the apostolate of the laity', which was reflected in an international re-discovery of the concept as being at the forefront of mission. His missiology pre-figured or reflected much of the developing concepts of the *missio Dei* and

contextualisation. Allan played a significant role in the development of a theology of mission and evangelism not only through *The Face of My Parish*, but also in his contributions in the Fifties and early Sixties towards a theology of evangelism for the World Council of Churches, where his work was reflective of the mood of international ecumenism of the time: unity for mission towards international evangelisation.

Assembling resolutely ‘modern’ elements in mission in conjunction with those which could be described as ‘postmodern’, Allan straddled different conceptions of the meaning and form of mission at a time immediately pre-figuring the beginnings of the secularisation process. Not only is his model ‘a tale of two paradigms’, but in its conflicting approaches and marriage of the ‘old’ and the ‘new’, it offers parallels to our present position in ‘late modernity’.

In particular, three tensions were identified between the ‘old’ and the ‘new’ which characterised his model of mission, and contributed to the diminution of its success: revolutionising the Church versus opposition to change; the ‘apostolate of the laity’ versus secularisation; and local witness versus mass evangelism.

At its core, if there is to be any transplantation to the present of a model of mission based on the ‘apostolate of the laity’, given those tensions, the institutional Church must no longer be relied upon solely as the object and end of mission, to allow space for the development of ‘emergent’ forms that might in turn illuminate the Church’s path but not be dependent upon it. Likewise, the bludgeon of mass evangelism is far distant from the social, ecclesial and cultural landscape, and hence should be confined to discussion and analysis, rather than implementation.

Through his absolute personal commitment to Christ and to the people, when married to his missiological theory, Tom Allan made a profound impact for over a decade upon the Scottish Church and nation, which continues to resonate. Allan wrote in 1960, on the 400th anniversary of the Scottish Reformation:

No great figure has emerged since the war who might lead the Kirk into the next phase of its expanding life.⁷⁶⁶

From the vantage point of a further half century, the identity of a ‘great figure’ who did so, and may have continued to do so in compelling ways had he survived beyond another five short years, is not challenging to locate.

Tom Allan’s missiology transcended ‘paradigms’, theological extremes and ‘single-issue’ mission, as preaching for salvation or social action for justice. He held them together under an all-encompassing goal to bring Christ and His Gospel to bear on every aspect of ordinary life, for all people from the heights to the depths of society, in the belief that transformation would occur. In those key concentrations, he has much to teach those who exercise mission now, in particular the Church and its laity.

6.2 THE FOUR STREAMS OF MISSIOLOGY

Taking the four streams of post-war mission together that have been identified and discussed in Chapters 2 to 4, where do the Christian encounters in mission of the laity and clergy with the ordinary people in Scotland in 1945-70 direct us now for theologies of the Church, the laity and the people?

The essence of the issues for the Church that result might be summarised thus— ‘remake or re-model?’

RE-MAKE?

The majority of the thesis has focused on the work of Tom Allan in the mobilization of the laity *within* the Church in the Forties to Sixties. It engaged with the world always on

⁷⁶⁶ AA6.5.8, ‘The Church of Scotland Today’.

the Church's terms, under the analogy 'God-Church-World'. The laity were viewed as boosting and developing mission *through* the Church and mission, exercised partly as a means of purging and redeveloping of the Church. Lay movements were either held under the umbrella of the Church, or fed back *into* the Church.

Issues of 'contextualisation' of the message and presence of the world in this context remain pertinent to the relationship of the world with the structure of the institutional Church. Therefore, 'the apostolate of the laity', if the correct sociological and missiological foundation is identified and applied for mission in the present day, retains at least the potential to purge or re-energise the Church, break down the clergy/laity divide, and re-align a culture of passivity and conservatism within the Church to one at the forefront of a 'missionary parish', as Allan had intended.

RE-MODEL?

Allan has been set in historical context through a reflection on the work of the Gorbals Group Ministry, derived from the East Harlem Protestant Parish; and of Robert Mackie, Ian Fraser and Scottish Churches House. They were attempts of laity and clergy to engage with the world on its own terms by re-casting the Church and re-forming its structure from beyond, or simply by-passing it altogether.

They existed adjunct to or beyond their founding institutions, engaging with the world on the world's terms under the maxim 'God- World –Church'. Laity and clergy were seen as boosting and developing mission outwith the present institutional Church. They sought to purge and redevelop the whole concept of what 'Church' might be. 'Church' was a prospective project rather than a fixed and unerring entity, being a work in progress depending on the movement of the people and the Spirit. 'Church' was thus expressed either by the people influencing the clergy, as in East Harlem and the early ideas in the Gorbals, or by consciously rejecting any stylised form in favour of living within the community as an implanted cell or group, as in the worker-priests and the later Gorbals, the latter having no intention of feeding back into the pre-existing institution.

Alternatively, Scottish Churches House sought to be a lay ‘seed-bed’, out of which would grow new forms of ecclesial entity and structure.

Once more, the potential persists, subject to appropriate focus and empowerment, for ordinary people to act in mission outwith the structures of the Church, such that there may be a re-imagining from the communities they encounter of the form that ‘Church’ might take; ‘emerging’ communities acting as a ‘Church before the Church’ as the Student Christian Movement once was, and as shall be identified in the phenomena of ‘basic ecclesial communities’ and the present ‘emerging Church’.

In all of the streams, there is one constant that persists – that the lives and theologies of lay, Church people, or ordinary people on the street, must take centre-stage if a process of contextualisation is to gather pace. As Ralph Morton wrote in 1953, in words that bear equal resonance now:

The day of the professional evangelist is past, at least when he stood apart as the exponent of faith to men. It is only through personal contact that men outside will be won. The members of the congregation are the agents of mission.⁷⁶⁷

The diagnosis of the ailment facing the institutional Church was near identical in all cases – that the Church had long ceased to be representative of ordinary people in their goals and aspirations, in their daily struggles in life, family and work, and in their social and political outlook. The solution was to be found in the re-planting of the place of Christianity at the heart of society.

Despite their varying emphases, the work of Tom Allan, George MacLeod, Scottish Churches House and the Gorbals Group Ministry were all attempts at promoting and establishing a lay, ecumenical witness in word and deed at the forefront of the re-energisation of Christianity in Scotland, and towards the desired integration of Christianity with the lives of the people.

⁷⁶⁷ T. Ralph Morton, *Evangelism in Scotland Today*, quoted in Shannon, *Tom Allan: In a Nutshell*, 10-11.

The three key Scottish streams and one American which have been considered in the preceding Chapters flowed from common springs. They were intermingled, co-dependent and sometimes mutually supportive. They occurred almost in a lineal progression, both in missiological and chronological terms, from ‘accommodation’ via ‘contextualisation’ towards ‘inculturation’, as ‘breakouts’ from the pre-war exposition of standardised mono-cultural Christianity.

‘Inculturation’, however, is a tentative, ongoing process. All theologies challenge and enrich each other. Mission being essentially dialogical, there must be a ‘giving and receiving’. The ultimate goal which did not come to immediate fruition in any of the streams was the end result described by Bosch as ‘interculturation’ – the creation of an indigenous Christian faith hybrid by the meeting of cultures.

Within those concurrent flows of development in the expression of ‘contextualisation’, however, there are elements of all of the models considered in Chapters 2 to 4 which retain a depth and resonance for present purposes, in particular when further filtered through current missiological frameworks. Indeed, there are aspects within the models which, had the subject breadth and word length permitted, would have merited further consideration to also critique and develop those frameworks.

In conclusion, therefore, we look now towards the key points from the preceding Chapters, directing a path towards a recovery of the ‘apostolate of the laity’ in mission; towards a recovery of lay equipping, resourcing and empowerment; of the recognition of the importance and primacy now of lay engagement in mission; of the aspects of mission and culture of which the laity ought to be in vigilance; of the definitional distinctions of ‘both/and’ missiology of proclamation and social action, and of the difference between ‘mission’ and ‘evangelism’, seeking a direction for the laity to engage in the *missio Dei* in ‘prophetic dialogue’ under ‘bold humility’.

6.3 TOWARDS A RECOVERY OF THE LAITY IN MISSION

There is a certain irony, as peculiar as it is revealing, to the fact that theology is almost bereft of sustained reflection on the history and theological significance of these 'laity', over 95 per cent of the members of the Christian Church through the ages. Theologically speaking, the Christian laity have been all but invisible for most of the last fifteen hundred years.⁷⁶⁸

What Tom Allan stumbled upon was that lay participation and interaction were the means of mission amongst ordinary people, whereas any attempt by clergy to impose or direct the development of such a community was borne from a different social and cultural vantage point, thus skewed in its outlook and counter-productive.

A sense of true *koinonia* was to be created both within the 'congregational group' that remained as a subset of the ecclesiastical structure, and more broadly within the parish between the Church congregation and those with whom their daily lives were shared.

Turning full circle, the future lies again in lay, participative, ecumenical mission- small, organic, 'local' mission through immediate points of contact of the laity within the 'micro-cultures' which they inhabit, their host Churches' practices serving as an illumination of such principles and the promise of the Kingdom.

It is a call to a corpus who might supervene internecine denominational rivalry, bypass the clergy divide, and diminish the fallout from the crisis in ministerial numbers, by taking control of their calling and *charisma*, thus preserving the potential for the survival of the Church as institution. Such a movement would require the participation and enthusiastic encouragement and intervention of clergy, to begin a handover to the laity of mission through a process of gradual encouragement and enablement, and thus the redirection of human and financial resources. If the structural model can no longer bear the numerical and financial weight, the 95% of the Church who constitute the laity will have to step forward to be the Church.

⁷⁶⁸ Paul Lakeland, 'The Laity', in G. Mannion & L. Mudge eds., *The Routledge Companion to the Christian Church*, (London & New York: Routledge, 2008), 511.

The laity may save the Church or it may wither in its present form. Jürgen Moltmann's words from forty years ago ring true:

Christian theology will in the future become more and more a practical and political theology. It will no longer be simply a theology for priests and pastors, but also a theology for the laity in their callings in the world. It will be directed not only toward divine service in the Church, but also toward divine service in the everyday life of the world.⁷⁶⁹

It was a theme that Ian Fraser returned to in *Reinventing Theology as the People's Work*,⁷⁷⁰ following his work with 'basic ecclesial communities'.

It takes a community, reflecting deeply on reality as it is experienced, to give theology substance and shape; a community in which every member's contribution is respected and relished, as well as critically assessed that it might find its place in a communal perceiving of God and his ways and works.⁷⁷¹

The various models lead us towards the realisation once more that the key to the future of mission in Scotland is the re-discovery of the empowerment of the local, in the small group or community in its most obvious Christian form, the Church laity. In empowering the laity as the voice of the future Church in the 'golden age' of the 1950s, therein lay the potential to create either the missionary parish envisioned by Allan through a cell of a 'Church within a Church'; or the growth from scratch of a new form of Christian community arising from engagement in the lives of ordinary people in the Gorbals; or Fraser's vision of participative ecumenism as the 'Church before the Church', and of the lay person understanding and applying the Gospel to their situation, developing local theology from that exercise, and thereby entwining the Gospel with their daily lives.

To consider the present derivations for mission for the laity from those models is to stand again in their times, at the crossroads for the direction of world missiology. It is to stand in the gardens of Bossey with those present for the WCC Consultation on a theology of

⁷⁶⁹ Jürgen Moltmann, *The Experiment Hope*, (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1975), 11.

⁷⁷⁰ (Glasgow: Wild Goose Publications, 1980).

⁷⁷¹ Ian M. Fraser, *Reinventing Theology as the People's Work*, 12.

evangelism in July 1960 and to re-assess mission history with the benefit of hindsight, concluding that:

- At the right wing, Graham's revivalist mission for salvation only will harm attempts at lay empowerment through his narrow doctrinal view, and his failure to adequately engage Christianity with social reality;
- At the left wing, Hoekendijk's 'shalom' mission shunning the Church will harm lay empowerment by restricting the role of Church and thus its laity in mission, and relating the *missio Dei* only to social and political action;
- In the centre/left is Allan and Webber's innovative, purposeful mission through the laity in a contextualised Church and Gospel, which may bear the vision of the future of Christian mission.

How then, could such a 'centre/left' model be translated to the present, and where does that goal lead us as *praxis*?

What is required, as Konrad Raiser set out in 1993, is a 'new profile of the laity', whereby:

The goal of lay commitment is the rebuilding of viable, non-exclusive social forms that will produce a community with a human face in which human dignity is recognized, basic human needs are satisfied and the diversity of cultural identities and human talents is duly recognized.⁷⁷²

There are several issues which cannot be avoided in seeking that 'new profile', in rebuilding 'viable non-exclusive social forms', which would need to be addressed to move towards a recovery of the laity in mission.

Firstly, the gap between clergy and laity would need to be rectified, in a re-assertion of the Church as the 'whole people of God'. It has undoubtedly persisted, despite much

⁷⁷² 'Profile of the Laity in the Ecumenical Movement', in Nicholas Apostola ed., *A Letter from Christ to the World: An Exploration of the Role of the Laity in the Church Today*, (Geneva: WCC, 1998), 18.

discussion, preaching and proclamation at local and international level of the Church for the ‘whole people of God’ and of the ‘apostolate of the laity’. The perceived legitimacy of theology and the provision of liturgy remains ‘clergy-centric’. The decision-making power on key issues is retained in the hands of the clergy and of a cumbersome upward Church bureaucracy. As Konrad Raiser reflected, the tragedy is that: ‘It must be admitted that, even in the Churches where the ecumenical discussion had initially met with widespread response, we today find a regression to a very much older understanding of the laity as in some sense having an inferior status.’⁷⁷³

Part of the blame for the marginalisation of the global discussion on the primacy of the laity undoubtedly lies with the shift in emphasis adopted in the Sixties by the World Council of Churches, nevertheless reflective of the turbulent social and political outlook; away from the ‘classical’ understanding in the ‘Christocentric universalism’ of its founders, and towards the conciliar focus on justice, peace and the integrity of creation espoused by its leaders from the mid-Sixties onwards.⁷⁷⁴ The second key factor, however, is a simple retention of control.

Viewed from the perspective of the end result, the enormous enthusiasm and drive of the two decades after World War II for the laity’s empowerment ran to the dust with little practical outcome. The failure of the Church to more radically adopt the implications of the drive towards the ‘apostolate of the laity’ in the years 1945 to 1955, identified by Allan in Scotland under his model, was reflected throughout Europe as time developed in response to the lay groups and Centres that had so inspired Allan. Thus Albert van den Heuvel of the WCC could write in 1963:

No Church in the whole world really practically applied the new partnership of the laity and the clergy, advocated in all corners of our sanctuaries. Instead of *doing*

⁷⁷³ Ibid.

⁷⁷⁴ The change of orientation is summed up in a bitter exchange between Newbigin and Raiser following the publication of the latter’s book *Ecumenism in Transition: A Paradigm Shift in the Ecumenical Movement* (Geneva: WCC, 1991), shortly after Raiser had been elected as General Secretary of the WCC – see Newbigin, ‘Ecumenical Amnesia’, *International Bulletin of Missionary Research*, January 1994, 2-5, & ‘Reply to Konrad Raiser’, *International Bulletin of Missionary Research*, April 1994, 51-52.

it, we made it a conference topic...When we look back at the period since 1945, we see the renewal movement imprisoned in carefully defined and tentative experiments which were never allowed to become a strategy...When the world changed around us, the Churches remained the same.⁷⁷⁵

The wording of a document or article declaiming a priority for the lay member of the Church is one matter, a genuine abrogation of power and empowerment in its transfer is another.

Secondly, the voice of the laity must be heard and respected. If one accepts that a central benefit of the gathering in the 'Golden Age' of lay people for dialogue and mutual action in such as Scottish Churches House was to act as a prophetic 'Church before the Church' in order to point the way forward for the institutions, that vital resource has been lost. Once lay members despair of the decision-makers of the Church as being somehow the 'distant other', divorced from the realities of everyday congregational and social existence, then a process of re-democratisation of the Presbyterian tradition becomes imperative.

Thirdly, even if one were to dismiss the use of that potential resource for the Church as over-optimistic and unrealistic, the laity must be equipped to act. The mere unity of action in mission amongst the laity that one can identify in the work of Tom Allan, and the inter-denominational vision of 'Tell Scotland', of itself valued, re-energised and re-engaged the laity as well as the existing Churches, forced the Churches towards a degree of 'contextualisation' by making them aware of the importance of the lay people within them and those without, and established closer links with the broader community. If the laity cannot be heard by being engaged in mutual dialogue for the benefit of all Churches, or if they cannot be engaged collectively in mission to create a public voice, then the prognosis may be one of the expending of all lay energies merely in the continuation of internal Church business until the core of the Church becomes *de minimis*.

There are two major expressions of lay commitment since the heady times of the Sixties which have sprung up ecclesially, almost by definition outwith the boundaries of the

⁷⁷⁵ *The Humiliation of the Church*, (London: SCM Press, 1966), 52.

Church, where all of those factors have been recognised: the dissolution of the laity/clergy divide, the voice of each member being heard, and the laity being called to act as key to the construction of the form and content of community. They are further examples of ‘Church before the Church’, from which the institution can readily learn in relation to the role and gifts of the laity.

The first is what is variously described as ‘basic ecclesial communities’, or ‘base communities’, emanating from Latin America but spreading throughout the developing world, and reviewed extensively in the mid-Eighties within Protestantism by Guillermo Cook⁷⁷⁶, and in Catholicism by Leonardo Boff.⁷⁷⁷ In Scottish perspective, a key agent in their identification and lionisation was Ian Fraser, working in the Seventies for the World Council of Churches, travelling around the world making contact with such communities.⁷⁷⁸ This was also, in essence, the nature of the Gorbals Group Ministry – as ministers in the form of laity, seeking to form a basic Christian gathering.

Such groups were, and are, multiple in form, with a particular focus on those who meet in secret in countries where otherwise Christianity would be persecuted, but also encompassing independent Churches and the ‘house Church’ movement in Asia. For Bosch, ‘their significance lies in the fact that the laity have come of age and are missionally involved in an imaginative way.’⁷⁷⁹ The claim of Boff, however, takes matters much further – as the necessary practical step to implement all of the well-stated talk on the lay apostolate since the Second World War, and a recapture by the laity of their rightful inheritance:

The basic Church communities are helping the whole Church in the process of clericalization, by restoring to the People of God, the faithful, the rights of which they have been deprived in the linear structure. On the level of theory, theology

⁷⁷⁶ Guillermo Cook, *The Expectation of the Poor: Latin American Basic Ecclesial Communities in Protestant Perspective*, (New York: Orbis Books, 1985).

⁷⁷⁷ Leonardo Boff, *Ecclesiology: The Base Communities Reinvent the Church*, (New York: Orbis Books, 1986).

⁷⁷⁸ A subject on which Fraser has written extensively, in publications such as *Living as a Counter-from Iona to Basic Christian Communities* (Glasgow, Wild Goose Publications, 1990); *Re-Inventing Church: Insights from Small Christian Communities and Reflections on a Journey Among Them* (Privately Published, 2001); and *Many Cells, One Body: Stories from Small Christian Communities*, (Geneva: WCC Publications, 2003).

⁷⁷⁹ Bosch, *Transforming Mission*, 473.

itself has already gone beyond the old pyramid. *But it is not enough to know. A new praxis must be implemented.* This is what the basic communities are saying. They are helping the whole Church to ‘re-invent’ itself, right in its foundations. Experiment is gradually confirming theory, and inspiring in the Church-as-institution a confidence in the viability of a new way of being Church in the world today.⁷⁸⁰

Whatever the veracity of his claims for such communities, and to an extent they must be considered uncritical and somewhat hagiographic, Boff was correct in his insistence that the words of scholars and Church hierarchy in relation to laity emancipation had to be followed by concrete action, learning from such outposts of a ‘new way of being Church today’.

The formation and development of ‘basic ecclesial communities’ by lay people was a precursor in the nature of its structure and personnel to the contemporary ‘emerging Church’ movement in the West. In the absence of a fuller consideration of their ecclesiology and theology, for present purposes it may be sufficient to side with Doug Gay in his sympathetic assessment of the ‘re-mixing’ of ecclesiology in the light of the ‘emerging Church’ movement, when he points to the predominance of lay involvement in the setting up of such groups. For Gay, ‘the emphasis on lay activism and involvement is one of the low Church Protestant distinctives that was valued and held to by at least the first generation of those who developed the emerging project’, arising from ‘the free Church, evangelical and charismatic roots of many of its founders and activists.’⁷⁸¹

The desire of the Church as institution, as Gay puts it, ‘to hug emerging groups and embrace the currents of renewal they represented’⁷⁸², may lead to a destructive pressure to conform to certain constituents which the institution insists upon doctrinally, but may also illuminate for the Church the action it must take to reform. Gay thus concludes that ‘this disturbing supplement that we have been taught to call ‘the laity’ has reasserted itself

⁷⁸⁰ Boff, *Ecclesiogenesis*, 259.

⁷⁸¹ Douglas C. Gay, *Re-Mixing the Church: Towards an Emerging Ecclesiology*, (London: SCM Press, 2011), 76.

⁷⁸² *Ibid*, 78.

in the emerging Church conversation in ways that call for further theological reflection, if it is not simply to have been a supplement suppressed.’⁷⁸³

Rather than consigning the laity to pasture, instead the choice in considering the role of the laity within the Church in mission, learning from the examples of ‘basic Christian communities’ and those who have distanced themselves from the institutional Church in all matters ‘emergent’, may be twofold: either (a) to elaborate a nuanced vision of the ‘Christocentric Universalism’ of the Fifties which takes more seriously the impact of the Trinity and the necessity of engagement in the struggles of the world, but retains its essential reliance on a Christological vision for the world; or (b) from the opposite perspective, to adopt a conciliar, relativised vision of the role of the Church in the world which does not seek to impose Christian norms elsewhere, or to find structural unity between denominations, but is further developed to still recognise that the existence of each denomination, and of the Christian Church as a whole, is dependent on an elucidation of the divine nature of Christ and the missionary calling to all.

The experience of lay empowerment and prominence within ‘basic Christian communities’, the ‘emerging Church’ conversation, in Tom Allan’s congregations and those of the EHPP, and in the participative ecumenism of Scottish Churches House and the ‘lay’ ministry of the Gorbals Group, offers direction markers as to where that merged pathway might lie.

6.4 DERIVATIONS AND PRINCIPLES

The final conclusions thus bring together all of the strands considered to garner principles that might assist in that search for direction in mission, offered for a Western nation such as Scotland, and for broader application where the context permits. Their pertinence to the present day and a framework for applying those models has been set out in selective,

⁷⁸³ Ibid, 78-79.

foundational aspects of present global missiology and sociology. The principles to follow are therefore filtered through those global considerations, such that they might resonate as potential building blocks appropriate to present late modern mission in the West, raising fundamental issues, but also, of necessity, acting as signposts only for reflection and development in the 'local' context. They are offered as a perception of 'the confluence of streams', from the tributaries both of the vibrant Scottish missiology of the immediate post-war period, and of the signs, symbols and ideas of the present day context.

The following principles are, therefore, collated by the writer as being derived directly from the missiology and mission practice of Tom Allan from Chapters 2 and 3, in comparison and conjunction with the three models of mission within Chapter 4, being the East Harlem Protestant Parish, the Gorbals Group Ministry, and Robert Mackie, Ian Fraser and Scottish Churches House, and in the light of the missiology set out in Chapter 5. In order to avoid constant repetition, specific reference to the sources in the preceding Chapters has not been made in relation to each principle: given that each principle finds common ground in the models, or, if not, the source of the principle ought to be apparent from a reading of the preceding Chapters.

Therefore, in my view, the ground that has been travelled in this thesis leads to the following principles for future mission.

6.4.1 The Underlying Missiology

Mission is set in the context of the *missio Dei*, of the movement of 'God-World-Church'.

Mission is Christological, in that throughout its history it has been focused in the expression in word and deed of the Gospel of Jesus Christ, and in the role of his meaning and teaching in an appreciation of the world that has been and is to come.

Mission is 'Trinitarian', in the sense of participation in the relationship of the Triune God in engagement in the formation of community in his image, and in harmonious inter-relationship.

‘Mission’ is ‘holistic’ and involves any action which furthers the tripartite relationship in communion with God, people and creation. ‘Mission’ may include any or all of the following: *kerygma*, *diakonia*, *leiturgia*, *martyria*, teaching, healing, and reconciliation into *koinonia*.

If ‘mission’ is holistic, ‘evangelism’ is specific. It is a sub-set of all of the above elements of ‘mission’, being ‘explicit and intentional voicing of the gospel’, focused on oral proclamation as *kerygma*, involving a call to conversion and discipleship.

Mission is central to all Christian expression and to the very existence of the Church. Therefore, in answer to the underlying question, ‘where is the laity’s place in the mission of God?’, mission by the laity in exercise of the *missio Dei* must recognise that there is Church because there is mission; it is of the DNA of the Church; that mission is the agenda, the fundamental reality of the Christian life.

Mission is a core value of the Church and thus its laity, but is only expressed in the power of the Triune God, not simply by the ingenuity or dynamism of our individual or collective efforts. The laity are foundational of a Church sent under the *missio Dei* for the mission within the world of the Son and Spirit through the Father. The concept of the *missio Dei* admitting through its intrinsic looseness extremes of Church-centrism or ‘humanisation’, the secure judgment is that the laity of the Church are the only self-conscious agents of the Kingdom, without their ecclesial community being necessarily equated with it.

The laity must therefore seek (a) to adapt the structures of the Church; (b) to listen to the world; (c) to realise that the whole world is the ‘mission field’; and (d) be renewed themselves and in community as a living sign of the Kingdom. They live and share, engage and act and serve contextually in seeking to emulate the incarnation of Christ. The laity move in the world not as conquerors but in solidarity; not in search of territorial acquisition, but in faith, offering love and seeking reconciliation.

Why ought particular attention be paid to the local and the lay in the exercise of the *missio Dei* in present circumstances? Why not seek to replicate grand-scale national mission? Or apply one message through global organisations?

Christianity became an inherent constituent in the myths and stories of the Western civilisation narrative. There was a strong marriage bond between Christianity and rational modernity. Religion in the present ‘scientific worldview’ operates within the private realm where the ‘heretical imperative’ has free reign, in which realm only it is acceptable to raise the question ‘why?’ By contrast, the permissible goal within the public realm is a rational search for a consensus on unadulterated ‘fact’, exclusively considering issues of ‘what?’ and ‘how?’.

In the late modern/postmodern era, there has been a secular backlash against the truth meta-narratives of religion, in a call for emancipation and in the exercise of a systematic functionalism. Crossing the private/public divide ‘is the most challenging missionary frontier of our time.’

Christian mission lies at the friction point where it seeks to encroach within the public sphere at a level beyond the compartmentalised or the advisory, that might by the words and actions of ordinary people offer critique or condemnation upon pre-supposed public ‘fact’. There is once more a sense of ‘bridging the gap’ cross-culturally, not only between Church and world, but between belief system and public norm, to challenge and confront untruths and injustices.

The impossibility of imposing globally one ethic or message now endangers the ecumenical hope of structural unity and worldwide Christianisation. In that light, the type of religion which might emerge or persist is that which cannot be tied to the modernist enterprise – communities of faith which are plural, disparate, individual and, ultimately, ‘local’. However, ‘local’ is not defined simply within a geographical sub-set, as imposing a mono-cultural stamp is now fraught with imprecision, if it were ever valid. Instead, ‘local’ relates beyond a defined geographical boundary, into boundaries of personal identity.

Therefore, the notion of ‘parish’ in the present context must be less of a defining entity for the exclusivity of areas of control, and more simply a bureaucratic convenience to divide wider resources. The ‘re-Churching’ of a definable, geographical parish is an unrealistic aspiration, and therefore the Church must be prepared to seek the proliferation of small Christian groups around its location.

In the light of Christianity’s universal claim, and in the necessity of communication and mutual support between such Christian communities, the key is to recognise ‘glocalization’ – the global in conversation with the local; the ‘indigenizing principle’ in conversation with the ‘pilgrim principle’ as a ‘universalizing factor’; and not necessarily the small community with the Church as institution.

There must, therefore, be a ‘master image’ of how the local belongs in the global, a ‘creation of networks’ which might ‘critically test’ the faith of each other – thus one heaven and earth for a diverse and pluriform humanity.

The laity, as individuals or collectively, are uniquely placed to exercise mission as ‘pilgrims’ in such circumstances, in their everyday contact with ‘the local’, whether it be geographically within a parish boundary, or in their interactions with the ‘micro-cultures’ of identity which form their own lives. They are in a unique position to relate such ‘local’ manifestations to the universalising global claims of Christianity.

‘Local’, lay, ecumenical, contextual theology, ecclesiology and mission *praxis*, in dialogical connection with the global, is one of few future visions which might involve an institutional Church.

6.4.2 The Place of the Church and the Laity

The Church must move away from a reversion to ‘revivalism’ – ‘call to church’ mission which continues to rely only on the performance of the ordinances of religion within a church building.

The answer to inspire the laity towards formation for mission is not mass evangelism either – ‘Crusades’ are likely to undermine rather than encourage a lay-based model, lead to division and make little sustainable difference in adherence, the vitality of congregations or Christian ‘conversions’.

The laity cannot remain ‘frozen in the ecclesiastical system’. As the exercise of mission is an essential expression of Church and gospel, the need is for a ‘radical laicism’. The future of mission lies with the laity in the slow, patient, organic growth of Christian communities, both within the pre-existing structure of the Church and without. Only the laity can engage continuously at every level with the world: everyone is thus a minister, a ‘worker-priest’ and an evangelist.

The ‘donor’ of the Gospel must have credibility and relevance: in a cross-cultural encounter, the Gospel is best represented by the laity of the existing Church, acting in their everyday lives at home, work and leisure; or by clergy acting almost as ‘worker-priests’ within the recipient culture.

Therefore, ‘the place of the lay person is decisive’, albeit ‘resourcing’ and the abrogation of control is required from the minister in the parish context. Common to all models considered, the fundamentals are that the laity as the whole people of God hold the key; and that in order for lay mission from the institution to have any prospect, the Gospel and Church must be contextualised; rooted, present and reflected in the everyday. There should be an interactive process of the gearing of laity and the regeneration of the Church, such that both might move towards a more dynamic *koinonia*.

This recognises the sometimes parlous state of the present Church in its clergy/laity divide and hierarchical structures of decision-making, its separation and distance from the world, reflective of a super-imposed culture; *semper reformanda*, always requiring to be reformed. The Church must change internally and in mission – ‘structural fundamentalism’ has no future. A local fellowship might, however, develop to radiate and

illuminate the Gospel, both in its internal practices and in the implementation of mission *praxis*.

The laity must be empowered for mission: whether it be in a quasi-military sense by developing an élite squad amongst the laity, the ‘congregational group’, to begin mission in the parish that would in turn exhibit the true *koinonia* which the Church and parish could emulate; or in ‘laity formation’, by a ‘bible resourcing’ of the laity to integrate the everyday with the word of God, such that the issues and problems of the world become the problems of the Christian community and of God.

To do so, the place of the laity within the structural model of the Church as institution needs to be re-considered, in particular the eldership as formalising and elevating lay involvement, and lay training being mostly focused on fulfilling the tasks of clergy within the Church and not missional ones. Decisions on the direction of ‘laity formation’ need to be taken by the laity and not the clergy.

6.4.3 The Exercise of Mission

If the laity thus have a crucial role in ‘local’ mission in conversation with the global, how should they recognise their context, in terms of the crossing of cultural boundaries? What Gospel have the laity to give? Are they receiving as well as giving?

The cultural ‘set’ of the parish boundary is now difficult to assume, as we live in a dispersion of ‘micro-cultures’ formed from ‘identity’ and personal choice. Every encounter is ‘cross-cultural’, every Gospel reading and application reflects the cultural inflexions of the donor, as does every Gospel reception. Mission must recognise the differing cultural backgrounds of both the Gospel, the donor and the recipient, and take heed of their interaction. Thus, ‘inculturation’ of the Gospel is a ‘tentative and continuing process’.

Mission is exercised as much as the learner as the teacher, forcing us to rethink our own understanding of the Gospel. True 'dialogue' across cultures entails a two-way process of mutual inter-relationship and growth towards a new theological and cultural creation; an 'interculturalisation'.

In that interaction, under what paradigm of mission should the laity act?

Mission should be carried out 'in bold humility' in our present late modern era, at a time of what is tentatively described as part of a 'paradigm shift' towards an 'emerging paradigm', as yet unestablished.

There are six 'constants' recognised to have been present in Christian mission in the past two millennia that must persist – Christology, ecclesiology, eschatology, salvation, anthropology and culture.

Three broad categorisations of 'types of theology', on a spectrum from 'orthodox/conservative', to 'liberal' to 'radical/liberation theology', have related throughout mission history to the six 'constants'.

There are, furthermore, six essential elements of mission now to which any concepts must relate - witness and proclamation; liturgy, prayer and contemplation; justice, peace and the integrity of creation; interreligious dialogue; inculturation; and reconciliation.

The synthesis is in the concept of 'prophetic dialogue', which provides 'an underlying theology of mission for these first years of the twenty-first century'.

The 'basic attitude' of mission is 'dialogue' in a mutual exchange, with no assumption of power or cultural superiority.

'Prophecy' entails 'courage to live out and speak the truth, albeit gently'. 'Dialogue' can be 'prophetic' in four senses – (a) 'speaking forth without words: witness'; (b) 'speaking forth with words: proclamation'; (c) 'speaking against without words: being a contrast community'; and (d) 'speaking against in words: speaking truth to power.'

At its core, ‘prophetic dialogue’ involves ‘the spirituality of inculturation’, in ‘reverence for the other’ as we continue to ‘live on the boundary’.

In the exercise of ‘prophetic dialogue’ in mission, a ministry of marked presence is vital, by living there or being integral within a ‘local’ community.

The starting point is always ‘contact’: in the past era by visitation evangelism, now by identifying the intersections of the Church community and the broader community in the parish.

As mission is contextual, its content should draw from (Scottish) religious and theological tradition and personal influence to bear the mark of authenticity, but be reflective as a ‘sign of the times’.

The movement of the laity in mission is towards ‘identification’ or ‘critical solidarity’ with the struggles around them. It is to bring Christianity to the people, and not the people to the Church. It is the process whereby we ‘share in God rather than attempting to observe God’.

The missiology to be expressed must recognise that religion is not simply an inner, private matter of the soul, but must be embodied. It is to serve everyone in the community in social and political action, regardless of race, class or religion. The message of the laity must be holistic in its terms, encompassing the whole of life in the detail of the everyday and the mundane, not in ‘grandstand’ preaching for conversion, but addressing the life and needs of the immediate context.

Mission involves both identification with all strands of humanity and a relationship with God. Thus, centrally, mission involves both the ‘participation in the struggles for justice’ and ‘sharing the knowledge of the kingdom’. A one-dimensional ‘single-issue’ approach to mission, concentrating solely on a particular facet, will not suffice. Local mission is resolutely ‘both/and’, through ‘every God-given method’, looking towards both personal conversion and social commitment.

Nonetheless, it must be ensured that the foundation of the Gospel is articulated in undertaking mission, whilst expressing a concurrent social witness. The 'Church' and its laity thus engages with the Gospel in the whole of life: it seeks the integration of the economic and social to the personal, spiritual experience. Mission thus seeks expression in Church buildings, in the street, in shop-fronts and in the home. It wears its Christianity 'on its sleeve'.

'Dialogue' entails mission by a humble and penitent Church, conscious of where it has come from and who it serves. Exercising 'prophetic dialogue' accepts that mission must be 'in bold humility', that the world is scarred by the immediate past failures of the Church to offer appropriate contextual engagement or to recognise surrounding social realities, and therefore will have to be slowly convinced that its present perception of the Church as institution is misplaced, and that the Church can indeed activate the goals outlined in an relevant and respectful manner.

Therefore, the approach of 'morality' is rejected. The character required is of unconditional acceptance of others, and of self-giving. Liturgy and worship is to be relevant to the language and issues of the world in the immediate locale.

Common difficulties begin at successfully addressing the heart of the problem identified, of bridging the cultural and theological gap between the Church and the world. 'Cultural intrusion' in mission creates an ongoing tension, which necessitates the urgent formation, growth and continuing activity of a 'local' laity who will assume control and direction within their 'local' community, otherwise proto-Church and mission might peter out. Efforts at forming Christian community may be hampered by local, social circumstances, such as sectarianism.

Within those exercising mission, there is further a recurrent problem in reconciling division within a group in any expression of mission, between those who see its purpose simply as either personal evangelism or as social action, and not 'both/and'. Unless those

visions can be reconciled with some clarity, any larger-scale endeavour is significantly hampered.

Likewise, there is a need to clarify some form of relationship in mission undertaken by a small, lay group with the mother institution, and as part of that clarification to consider whether the small, lay group might be permitted to become *esse* or must remain *bene esse* of the Church. The solution may lie in the institutional Church sponsoring and supporting such movements, but being willing to allow experimentation to develop, grow independently and potentially fail, learning in its own practice from such triumphs and struggles, and not seeking to own either.

To overcome institutional reaction and apathy may be central to effectiveness. The engaged laity should be ready for resistance by those other lay members determined to maintain the sanctification of the established norms, being exercised against, firstly, themselves, secondly, against those ‘incomers’ who are unaware or unwilling to accept those norms, and, thirdly, against any attempt to disturb those norms in the re-alignment of the focus of the Church as community.

Participative ecumenism of the laity across denominational divides is a given for the exercise of ‘prophetic dialogue’. Mission is ecumenical in outlook and encourages contact and action in conjunction with pre-existing denominations, to embrace ecumenical respect and co-operation.

All mission must ‘walk the tightrope’, avoiding theological extremes that would draw the community into a ‘holy huddle’, never turning away from the world in its midst. Allegiance in mission to cliques and closed fraternities should be avoided. Like-minded contemporaries within the Church, whether at ministerial or lay level, must be willing to engage fully together by setting aside differences in theological nuance.

It must be recognised that this may all have to be achieved in a sometimes uncomfortable marriage between the ‘old’ and the ‘new’.

At a personal level, there is the difficulty of knowing what to say or do, given a learned, cultural vocabulary of Christianity. There is a need to become more theologically articulate, in order to contextualise models of mission to the local situation, along with dedication and commitment.

6.4.4 The Goal of Mission

Mission is a voyage of empathy and self-giving, towards a bi-lateral exchange seeking ‘interculturalisation’, an intermingling of theologies to create ‘a kind of osmosis’; a new hybrid of theologies and cultures – the contextual inculturation of Christianity and the Christianisation of culture.

Gospel and culture are thus interactive, and the goal of mission is the creation of a symbiotic union which becomes expressed in local theologies of the people and an indigenous ‘Church’. The key questions are therefore: how does the Gospel speak to these people, in this place, in this age, within this extant culture?

The exercise of mission, transcending all ‘paradigms’ and ‘constants’, is an interaction of one human with another exercising a process of ‘prophetic dialogue’, whether that be in a form of oral proclamation or simply by the unexpected gift and exercise of God’s love. In other words, a mutual exchange is established with a learning and growing process occurring between the two participants, carried out in respect and trust avoiding the danger of proselytism, whereby the local and contextual, the common material that is apparent in humanity and circumstance, is infused with insight from the Gospel.

Thus establishing ‘dialogue’ is central to all models – seeking to ‘bridge the gap’, to reach out in humility and honesty, setting aside the assumptions of power and knowledge which might come with clericalisation and institution, looking to learn in the encounter as well as teach, to see where God is already active in the world and to take part.

In all models lies also the necessary inclusion of the element of the ‘prophetic’ within ‘dialogue’, a development of a sense of the presence of God in the encounter, of the

transcendent informing the particular, that the presence of God will influence or direct the direction of the journey thereafter.

Mission will seek 'rayonnement', that the 'prophetic dialogue' of the laity will propagate and proliferate, seeking a constant re-iteration of mission of engagement and service.

The goal is for small, local, organic growth of Christian communities, of 'living cells', or at least the breaking down of the institution into smaller units which can be near-autonomous. A key purpose of mission is thus 'to foster the multiplication of local congregations', gatherings of true *koinonia* expressing faith, word and sacrament, but not necessarily by the building up of existing congregations, nor by the identical replication of structures.

The divergent culture of 'Church' and 'world' must be addressed, in a movement away from the sanctification of an enclosed, traditional Church community and the perception of set, unerring values. Any emerging Christian communities must be formed by the culture and remain of the culture. Their form and leadership must become more fully indigenous, led and developed by the people of that culture, not only to ensure 'contextualisation' and the longer-term continuance of the community, but also to avoid norms of power and 'cultural intrusion' and to promote the stripping away of Christianity from the acquired culture of the donor. Its theology may be freshly formed by a meeting of its expression by the donor, and the reaction in cultural context of the recipient. The desired outcome is to form new 'interculturated' Christian expressions of the nature of the gathering and inter-relationship of Christians, in original 'Church' forms.

The donor should thus seek to withdraw as much as possible once lay participation has begun: 'light the touch paper and retire'. The presence of the donor, and any position of power in their retention and dissemination of knowledge, ought to persist only in the period of the introduction of the Gospel and the provision of theological tools for local hermeneutics. Thus the indigenous form of 'inculturated' Christianity might be left to

develop within the previous receiving culture; avoiding dependence on the cultural reading of Christianity as an institution, the control of development, or the imposition by that institution of a received set of ecclesiological, missional, doctrinal, liturgical or governmental norms.

‘Church’ in whatever form must seek to be an all-inclusive entity, drawing from a breadth of social groupings, or at least relate to a broader universality. The ‘local’ is paramount, but must connect with and be informed by the ‘global’.

A re-vitalised institutional Church may still hold a role as a hub for such development, but not of necessity. It should engage with and learn from the missiological strands of ‘Emerging Church’ - the institution may be fed from without. The Student Christian Movement, ‘basic ecclesial communities’ and ‘emerging Church’ have formed ‘Church before the Church’. They set the tone for the institution in a form of the empowerment of the laity which would assist in breaking the lay/clergy divide, allowing a voice for the laity, and placing the laity at the forefront of the community, whilst understanding contextuality, embracing difference and finding common ground for broader development. They, in turn, provide models for the nature of community which the Church laity might seek in mission.

Concomitant with the focus on the Church laity exercising contextualized, cross-cultural mission in ‘prophetic dialogue’, there thus remains the hope of re-forming the institutional Church as *polis*, exercising within its internal structures a movement towards the embodiment of a true *koinonia* in the implementation of love and mutual forgiveness, radiating the Gospel in its midst.

With those principles, is there a single model in those which have been encountered that could be held up as having best fulfilled the basic criteria: the laity focused on ‘prophetic

dialogue; within the world but mindful of God's presence; acting as a beacon to be the 'Church before the Church', leading and guiding its path? As the focus reverts at the conclusion to Tom Allan, attention returns to his ministry at St George's Tron from 1955 to 1964. The model Allan which implemented at that time was of the laity as the whole people of God together, in the name of Christ, being present and available to all, thus:

- (a) Being overt in their compassion;
- (b) Being active in the community;
- (c) Exercising social concern and a radical, outspoken social commitment;
- (d) Giving priority to the poor and lowly;
- (e) Providing them concurrently with physical refuge and spiritual hope;
- (f) Expressing the Gospel, both in word and deed; and
- (g) Doing so in a manner which relates only to their specific context, at that time in that place, but in recognition of points of wider conjunction.

Like Allan's model, mission in those terms now would also be rooted in its own (Scottish) tradition, local context and be characterised not only by personal influences, but also a deep personal grasp of theology, and by a renewed vigour and confidence. It would be all-encompassing in its scope, content and places of engagement, as Allan set out:

The mission of the Church is concerned not only with the man, but with the world in which the man lives, and is committed to bringing the light of God to bear upon the whole of life. This can only be accomplished in a continuing engagement with the world at every level-within which engagement every 'method' of evangelism, explored and yet to be explored, has a part to play.⁷⁸⁴

Above all, it would begin to express the utmost assurance in the expectation, as did Allan, that the process of exercising mission might be startlingly transformational for ordinary people, especially the unloved and despairing, as Gospel, Church and World come together in a dynamic interaction.

⁷⁸⁴ Tom Allan, *The Agent of Mission: The Lay Group in Evangelism, Its Significance and Task*, (Glasgow: Tell Scotland Pamphlet, 1954), 3.

Who could doubt that the *missio Dei* would then be encountered to dramatic effect, in moments of *kairoi*? As Tom Allan wrote, ‘...as if Christ who raised Lazarus from the dead, can’t raise an alcoholic from the gutters of Buchanan Street.’⁷⁸⁵

⁷⁸⁵ AA6.5.7, *EC*, c.1959, Article 1.

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John Harvey, Govan, Glasgow, (2010 and following)

Sandy MacDonald, Paisley - former parishioner of Tom Allan and former Moderator of the General Assembly of the Church of Scotland, (early 2012)

Jenny Peach, North Kelvinside, Glasgow - parishioner of Tom Allan, North Kelvinside, Glasgow, (26/04/10)

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